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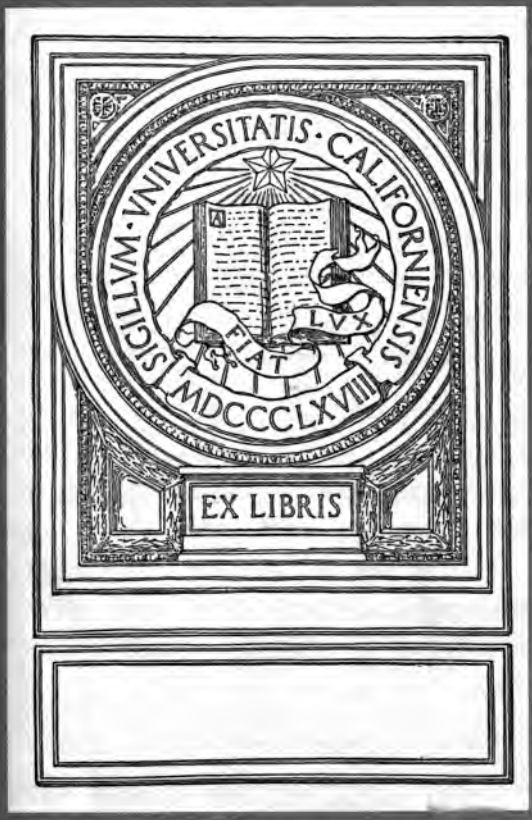
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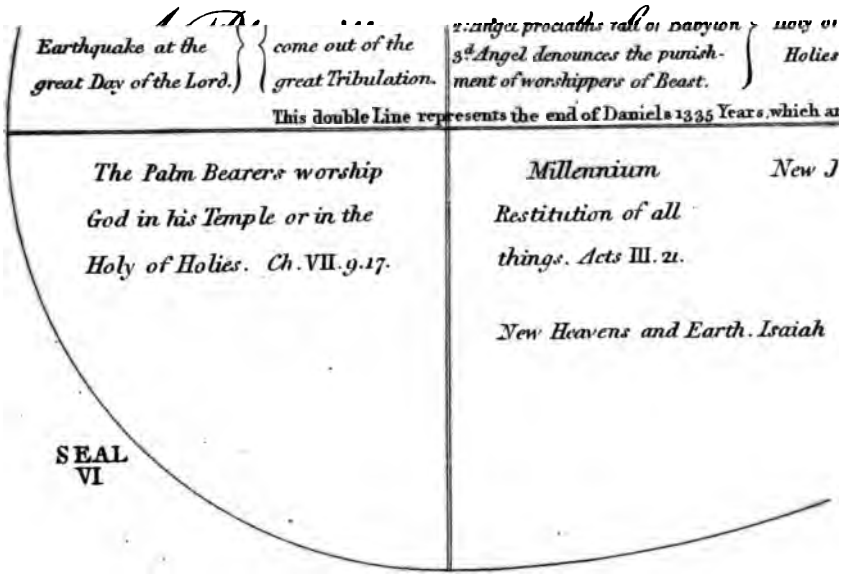

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A

DISSERTATION

ON THE

SEALS AND TRUMPETS

OF THE

Apocalypse,

AND THE

PROPHETICAL PERIOD

OF

TWELVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY YEARS.

BY WILLIAM CUNINGHAME, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF REMARKS ON DAVID LEVI'S DISSERTATIONS ON THE PROPHECIES RELATIVE TO THE MESSIAH.

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

"AND WHAT I SAY UNTO YOU, I SAY UNTO ALL:—WATCH."

MARK xiii. 37.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The following are the circumstances which gave rise to the volume now submitted to the public. I was for some years engaged in a controversy with Mr. Faber, carried on through the medium of a respectable periodical work, upon the subject of the commencement and end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, and some other points connected with the study of prophecy. Since the close of the above controversy, I have frequently been advised to re-publish my papers in a separate volume. But to this it seemed to me that there were strong objections, as it would be impossible for *any reader* to understand what I had written, without seeing likewise the papers of my respectable opponent. Being sensible, however, of the great practical importance of the inquiry into the true era of the above prophetical period, I was desirous of laying before the public the substance of what I had written on the subject. But I felt the strength of the following remarks, which I met with some years ago, in a review of Archdeacon Woodhouse's Translation of the Apocalypse: "It is "comparatively easy to give, to interpretations of "*detached* parts of the Apocalypse, an appearance of

"truth, which would totally vanish, were they con-
"sidered in connection with the general frame of the
"book. We will not say that the only fair method,
"but we must say that by much the fairest method,
"of interpreting the prophecies of the Revelation,
"is to compose a continued comment upon the book.
"The reader then feels that he is in some degree
"put in a condition to judge for himself; the conse-
"quence, at any rate, is either a readier detection
"of error, or a more perfect conviction, if the
"interpretation be satisfactory."*

Influenced by a sense of the justice of the above observations, and having for twelve years turned my attention to the study of prophecy, I therefore determined to aim at giving a connected view of the whole prophecies of the seals and trumpets of the Apocalypse, so far as they appear to have been accomplished; and to embody in it the substance of my argument respecting the twelve hundred and sixty years; but in such a way as to divest that argument of the shape and appearance of controversy. In what manner the above design has been executed, the public will decide. I could have wished that more time had been devoted to the execution of my purpose; but being much engaged in secular affairs of various kinds, I had not a choice in this respect. What is now submitted to the public, with the exception of the Preface, some of the Notes,

* Christian Observer, vol. v. p. 557, for 1806.

and the last chapter, was written in the intervals of business, between the middle of June and of January last; and I cannot but feel that some parts of the work have been finished in rather a hasty manner. But I thought it better to let it go forth as it is, than to delay the publication of it for another year. Should this volume reach a second edition, I shall be glad to avail myself of any critical remarks which may be made upon it to render it less imperfect.

In this work, I take for granted, that the four beasts seen by Daniel in the seventh chapter of his prophecies, signify the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchies; and that the little horn of his fourth beast is a symbol of the papal power; and likewise that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is the church of Rome. These may be considered as *first principles* in the study of prophecy, of which no well-instructed protestant ought to be ignorant; and it is not reasonable to expect that every one who takes up his pen on the subject of prophecy, should return back to prove anew those first principles which few persons call in question, and which have already been established in the writings of the ablest commentators.*

* I have deemed it proper, in this edition of my work, to leave out all that part of the preface of the first edition, containing strictures on the opinion of the author of *A Christian's Survey of all the primary Events and Periods of the World.* The position of that writer, with respect to the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast, has

In these pages the reader will find frequent mention of the second personal advent of our Lord. I am aware that it is the common doctrine of the present day, both among private Christians and the teachers of religion, to interpret, in a figurative sense, many of those passages which I suppose to refer to that great event. But I have the support of the greatest writers on prophecy in understanding them literally; and the opinion which I now hold on this point, is not only the result of a long and most attentive consideration of the prophetical scriptures, but was slowly and reluctantly formed, in opposition to early prejudices. In the continued prevalence of the opposite sentiment, which places the second advent of our Saviour, at the close of the millennium, and thus supposes it to be yet many ages distant from our times, we may discern the symptoms of that spirit of unbelief which our Lord assures us, shall mark the period when he appears again. "Nevertheless, "when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith "in the earth?"* by which is meant, not faith in the doctrines of his Gospel in general, but in the particular promises which relate to the second advent.

been overthrown by the events of the last four years: and with regard to his opinion concerning the 1260 prophetical days, the reader will find some remarks in the preface to this edition. Under these circumstances, it appears to me quite unnecessary to re-publish my former strictures, a great part of which are no longer applicable to the existing state of things. 2d Edition.

* Luke xviii. 8.

On this point I shall introduce the following quotation from King's Remarks on the Signs of the Times.*

"On the one hand, the Jews would not apprehend, nor believe, the words of holy prophecy written concerning our Lord's first coming, *in his state of deep humiliation and suffering*, being dazzled with bright apprehensions of what was written concerning his *second coming, his coming in glory*; and on the other hand, the Christian world are now in the contrary extreme, too backward to believe and apprehend what is really written in the same words of holy prophecy concerning *his second coming upon earth in glory*, being blinded by their constant habit of contending against the Jews chiefly for the former, and by the presumptuous mystical application which has taken place, by means of applying those holy words that relate to the latter, merely to the fancied prosperity of the Christian church on earth; though such fancied prosperity is a misapplication of the words, in direct contradiction to all the warnings of our Lord himself and of his holy Apostles."

I shall now state some of the principles upon which I proceed in interpreting the Apocalypse.

1st. I assign to the same symbols the same meaning; or where there is any variation of signification,

* Pages 26 and 27.

I endeavour to fix the meaning on the principles of analogy.

2d. I apply no prophecy of the Apocalypse to more than one series of events: *i. e.* I deny that the principles of a first and secondary sense, however it may be admitted in interpreting the unchronological prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c. can be allowed in explaining the Apocalypse.*

3d. I apply symbols of the same nature, or homogeneous, to similar objects.

4th. I do not attempt to explain every minute part of a symbol, but content myself with endeavouring to seize its great outlines. This rule is well known, and carefully observed by all judicious expositors of the scriptural parables. Now I consider the symbols of the Apocalypse in the light of *prophetical parables.*

5th. In ascertaining the places of the different visions, and their chronological coincidence, I pay strict attention to the internal marks mentioned by Mr. Frazer, in his excellent rule for that purpose, which is as follows:

"The internal marks inserted in the prophecies "of the Revelation, may be fitly compared to the "corresponding loops in the curtains of the taber-"nacle: by observing them, the Levites discovered "the place of each separate curtain, and joined them

* The first and second of these principles are nearly the same with two of Mr. Faber's rules.

"together, so as to form one tent. So by these "marks, the attentive reader is able to discover the "place of each separate vision—whether it carries "on the collateral prophecy, or gives a collateral "representation of times already mentioned; and "to connect them so as to form one connected pro-"phecy.

"Now I find, that after the seventh trumpet "sounds (Rev. xi. 15), and a brief summary is "given of the events contained in it in the three "following verses, it is said (ver. 19), *I saw the "tabernacle of the temple of God in heaven opened.* "This expression I consider as a mark inserted like "the loop in the edge of the curtain, where the "series of the narration is broken off.

"Accordingly the same words are repeated (Rev. "xv. 5), like the corresponding loop in the edge "of the other curtain; then it is said, *And the "seven angels came out of the temple having the "seven plagues:* which shews that the first of these "vials follows after the sounding of the seventh "trumpet."

To conclude, whether any advances are made, in the following pages, towards a more perfect explanation of this mysterious book, it is not for me to judge. But as I cannot hope to have avoided mistakes, I would desire to imbibe the spirit of the following passage, from Archdeacon Woodhouse's Introduction to his work on the Apocalypse;—

"Truth, in this important research, is, I hope, as "it ought to be, my principal concern; and I shall "rejoice to see these sacred prophecies truly inter-"preted, though the correction of my mistakes "should lay the foundation of so desirable a super-"structure."

March, 1813.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE work now offered to the Public in a second edition, was composed in the year 1812, while the French power was yet unbroken, and during the campaign of Bonaparte in Russia. The author, having long entertained a persuasion, that the events of our own times are rapidly unfolding the intricacies of the prophetic roll of the Scriptures, has for many years been in the habit of associating an attentive view of all the passing scenes, which in this age, have astonished and confounded the anticipations and calculations of human wisdom, with the study of the divine word of inspiration.

If, however, it be difficult, as in many cases it confessedly is, to interpret predictions, which are already completely fulfilled, it certainly is a more arduous task, to apply prophecy to events, which are only in part developed. Some indeed, are so convinced of the impossibility of success in such an undertaking, as to reject as rash and illegitimate, all attempts, to read in the sacred volume the occurrences of our own times. But it may be shown, from the scriptures, that this opinion is wrong.—Our Lord reproved the Jews, for not discerning the

signs of their own times. Now what were these signs, but the strict correspondence of the events which they beheld, with the prophetic annunciations of a former age? Again, our Saviour, after predicting in highly figurative language the political convulsions, which in the last ages were to be the forerunners of the second advent, says to his church, "When ye see these things begin to come to pass, "then lift up your heads, for your redemption "draweth nigh."* But how, in this case also, are believers to discern the accomplishment of the predicted signs, unless by comparing the words of Christ with current events?

Indeed, the sentiment I am now refuting, though it comes to us under the specious guise of humility and self-diffidence, is in reality founded on indolence and sloth, and partakes largely of that spirit of unbelief, which has usually pervaded the minds of the great body of mankind, under the most unequivocal indications of the wrath of the Almighty, and when his judgments have been most conspicuously poured forth, on a profane and thoughtless world.

What has been said, may be sufficient to vindicate the legitimacy of the inquiries pursued in this volume. But when the observations already made, with respect to the great difficulty of this department of sacred researches are considered, it will not be matter of surprise, that I should in my first edition, have

* Luke xxi. 18.

fallen into very important mistakes. These errors are acknowledged in their proper places, and it is therefore unnecessary for me to mention them more particularly here. I shall however, observe, that though the late mighty political changes in Europe, have entirely contradicted some of my former anticipations, they seem to be in no degree inconsistent with my general theory. On the contrary, the present pacification of the nations which occupy the territories of the western empire, the great theatre of the Apocalyptic prophecies, appears to fill up an important chasm in the exposition I had previously offered, of the vision at the beginning of the seventh chapter, which I consider, to be the great key to the present state of the world. In other respects also, my views of the characters of the present period; of its place in the chronology of prophecy, and of the nature of the events that are approaching, not only remain unchanged, but are more and more confirmed by the events of the last four years.

The interval which has elapsed since the first publication of the work, has afforded me an opportunity of carefully reviewing its principles. But whatever errors I have been led into with respect to the meaning of particular passages, I have not as yet seen reason to abandon any one of my canons of interpretation; and after having considered all the objections that I have met with to my general

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THE following are the circumstances which gave rise to the volume now submitted to the public. I was for some years engaged in a controversy with Mr. Faber, carried on through the medium of a respectable periodical work, upon the subject of the commencement and end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, and some other points connected with the study of prophecy. Since the close of the above controversy, I have frequently been advised to re-publish my papers in a separate volume. But to this it seemed to me that there were strong objections, as it would be impossible for any reader to understand what I had written, without seeing likewise the papers of my respectable opponent. Being sensible, however, of the great practical importance of the inquiry into the true era of the above prophetical period, I was desirous of laying before the public the substance of what I had written on the subject. But I felt the strength of the following remarks, which I met with some years ago, in a review of Archdeacon Woodhouse's Translation of the Apocalypse: "It is "comparatively easy to give, to interpretations of "*detached* parts of the Apocalypse, an appearance of

place in 1810,* exists still in 1817. That these events have also disappointed my conjectures, I have already freely acknowledged. But while they are fatal to Mr. Penn's system, they leave the body of mine entire, and overthrow only some conclusions which were not essential to it.

I shall here, however, as Mr. Penn thinks it incumbent upon me to do it, give a concise view of the reasons on which is founded the application of the above symbol to the papal power.

1*st*. The little horn was seen to arise *after* the other horns.† Now the rise of the ten Gothic horns took place before the end of the fifth century. But that of the papal power cannot be dated earlier than the beginning of the sixth century, consequently it rose after the horns, and in this respect the type answers the supposed antitype.

2*d*. The horn was *little*, and always remained so. Mr. Penn avers that this is to be interpreted in respect of the shortness of its duration. But in the very next vision, viz. that of the ram and he goat (Dan. viii.), the first horn of the he goat, symbolizing the individual power of Alexander the Great, is represented as being notable חזות or great, though he reigned only twelve years. We may hence infer, that the size of a horn denotes not, as Mr. Penn supposes, the period of its duration, but its intrinsical physical power. The smallness of the anoma-

* Christian's Survey, p. 90. † Dan. vii. 24.

lous horn of the fourth beast indicates therefore, not its more recent origin, but that its physical power when compared with that of the others is small. This corresponds with what history testifies of the papal dominion. The influence of that power has never arisen from its physical force, but from its policy and cunning, pointed out by the eyes of the horn:* and from its spiritual pretensions, symbolized by its mouth speaking great things, whereby it obtained a paramount control over the minds of men, which even in the present period they have been unable entirely to shake off.†

* Dan. vii. 8.

† The late papal bull against Bible Societies, which I here insert, is in some measure illustrative of the meaning of the expression, that this horn had a mouth speaking great things. The following is a copy of this bull.

Translation of the Bull against Bible Societies, issued from Rome, June 29, 1816, by Pope Pius VII. to the Archbishop of Gnezn, Primate of Poland.

" POPE PIUS VII.

" VENERABLE BROTHER,

" Health and apostolic benediction.

" In our last letter to you we promised, very soon, to return an " answer to yours, in which you have appealed to this holy see, in " the name also of the other bishops of Poland, respecting what are " called *Bible Societies*, and have earnestly inquired of us what you " ought to do in this affair. We long since, indeed, wished to comply " with your request; but an incredible variety of accumulating con- " cerns have so pressed upon us on every side, that till this day we " could not yield to your solicitation.

" We have been truly shocked at this most crafty device, by which

3d. The power of the horn is commensurate in time, with that of the beast, in Rev. xiii. which is

"the very foundations of religion are undermined; and having, "because of the great importance of the subject, convened for con- "sultation our venerable brethren, the cardinals of the holy Roman "church, we have, with the utmost care and attention, deliberated "upon the measures proper to be adopted by our pontifical authority, "in order to remedy and abolish this pestilence as far as possible. "In the mean time, we heartily congratulate you, venerable brother; "and we commend you again and again in the Lord, as it is fit we "should, upon the singular zeal you have displayed under circum- "stances so hazardous to Christianity, in having denounced to the "apostolic see, this defilement of the faith, most imminently dan- "gerous to souls. And although we perceive that it is not at all "necessary to excite him to activity who is making haste, since of "your own accord you have already shewn an ardent desire to detect "and oppose the impious machinations of these innovators; yet, in "conformity with our office, we again and again exhort you, that "whatever you can achieve by power, provide for by counsel, or "effect by authority, you will daily execute with the utmost earnest- "ness, placing yourself as a wall for the house of Israel.

"For this end we issue the present letter, viz. that we may convey "to you a signal testimony of our approbation of your laudable "exertions, and also may endeavour therein still more and more to "excite your pastoral solicitude and vigilance.—For the general good "imperiously requires us to combine all our means and energies to "frustrate the plans which are prepared by its enemies for the de- "struction of our most holy religion; whence it becomes an episcopal "duty, that you first of all expose the wickedness of this nefarious "scheme, as you already are doing so admirably, to the view of the "faithful, and openly publish the same, according to the rules pre- "scribed by the Church, with all that erudition and wisdom in which "you excel; namely, "that Bibles printed *by heretics* are numbered "among prohibited books, by the rules of the Index (No. II. & III.); "for it is evident from experience, that the Holy Scriptures, when

admitted by Mr. Penn himself to denote the Roman empire, in its divided state. The duration of the

" circulated in the vulgar tongue, have, through the temerity of men, " produced more harm than benefit:" (Rule IV.) And this is the " more to be dreaded in times so depraved, when our holy religion is " assailed from every quarter with great cunning and effort, and the " most grievous wounds are inflicted on the Church. It is therefore " necessary to adhere to the salutary decree of the Congregation of " the Index (June 13th, 1757), that no versions of the Bible in the " vulgar tongue be permitted, *except such as are approved by the* " *apostolic see*, or published with annotations extracted from the " writings of the holy fathers of the Church."

" We confidently hope that, even in these turbulent circumstances, " the conduct of the Poles will afford the clearest evidences in support " of the religion of their ancestors; and this especially by your care " as well as that of the other prelates of this kingdom, *whom, on* " *account of the stand they are so wonderfully making for the faith* " *committed to them, we congratulate in the Lord*, trusting that they " all will very abundantly justify the opinion which we have enter- " tained of them.

" It is moreover necessary that you should transmit to us, as soon " as possible, the Bible which Jacob Wuiek published in the Polish " language with a commentary, as well as a copy of the edition of " it lately put forth without those annotations, taken from the " writings of the holy fathers of our church, or other learned Ca- " tholics, with your opinion upon it; that thus, from collating them " together, it may be ascertained, after mature investigation, what " errors may lie insidiously concealed therein, and that we may " pronounce our judgment on this affair, for the preservation of the " true faith.

" Proceed, therefore, venerable brother, to pursue the truly pious " course upon which you have entered; viz. diligently to fight the " battles of the Lord in sound doctrine, and warn the people en- " trusted to your care, that they fall not into the snares which are " prepared for them, to their everlasting ruin. The Church waits

power of the horn is limited, in Dan. vii. 25, to three times and a half; that of the beast in Rev. xiii. 7, to forty-two months, which is precisely three times (years,) and a half. From this circumstance, added to other characteristical resemblances, it is manifest, and has appeared so to the most eminent protestant commentators, that this little horn is a symbol of the same power, as is represented in Rev. xiii. by the beast with two horns, which Mr. Penn acknowledges to be the papacy.

4th. The episcopal character of the power, designated by the horn, is marked by the singular circumstance, of this horn having eyes, like the eyes of a man. There is in this, a manifest allusion to the Greek word, for a bishop, επισκοπος, which literally signifies *an overseer.*

The argument of Mr. Penn, against this application of the symbol, founded on what is termed the prescriptive belief of the primitive church, seems entitled to no weight. For we are assured in the

" for this from you, as well as the other bishops, whom our epistle " equally concerns; and we most anxiously expect it, that the deep " sorrow we feel on account of this new species of tares which an " enemy is sowing so abundantly, may, by this cheering hope, be " somewhat alleviated; and, together with the apostolic benediction " which we bestow on you and your fellow bishops, we heartily invoke " on yourself and them a continual increase of spiritual gifts, for " the good of the Lord's flock.

" Given at Rome, at St. Mary the Greater, June 29, 1816, the " 17th year of our Pontificate.

" POPE PIUS VII."

Scriptures, that even the prophets understood not their own predictions. This prescriptive belief, therefore, when strictly analyzed, appears to consist of nothing more, than the unauthorized conjectures of the uninspired writers called the Fathers, concerning the manner of the accomplishment of Daniel's prophecy, before events had thrown light upon its fulfilment.

The second leading point, wherein Mr. Penn has seen it proper to deviate from the general system of protestant exposition, consists in his having denied that the existence of the prophetical period of 1260 years, can with certainty be inferred, from the writings of Daniel and St. John. In his reply to my strictures, he lays much stress upon the period not being expressly mentioned in the Scriptures. Now I would ask *Mr. Penn*, whether the Roman empire which he discovers in the beast of the Apocalypse, or the papal power which he discerns in the two-horned beast, be any where mentioned in the Scriptures by their proper names? If it be possible, then, as Mr. Penn himself allows, to form undoubted deductions from the Scriptures, with respeet to the prophetical designation of a secular and spiritual empire, though that empire be not mentioned by name; may not the characters likewise of a chronological period be so clearly marked, and the interpretation of those characters so determinately prescribed, by the analogy of some other similar number,

with respect to which there is a common agreement among Jewish, and Catholic, and Protestant expositors, as to render it not a matter of rational doubt, what specific period is designed by the number which is the subject of investigation, even though that period be no where expressed without the same enigmatical disguise which is common to the whole system of prophetical truth, and one of the ends of which is expressly declared to be, that though the wise shall understand, yet none of the wicked shall comprehend the important, but mysterious revelation of the divine purposes? Now, it was shown in my former preface, that by such principles the existence of the prophetical period of 1260 years, is certainly discoverable from the Scriptures. In his reply to my strictures, however, the author of the Christian's Survey wholly passes over that part of my argument which is derived from the analogy of the seventy weeks of Daniel with the period in question, in which much of the strength of my reasoning consists.

But Mr. Penn reasons, that because a controversy of some years existed between Mr. Faber and myself, on the subject of the commencement and close of that prophetical period, therefore the period itself is unintelligible in point of fact, and uncertain, hypothetical and equivocal. This argument would indeed confine the range of intelligible scriptural truth, within very narrow limits, for what parts of

the evangelical system have not in a similar manner been the subjects of controversy? And to quote an example nearer in point, does it follow *(I repeat the question)* because Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks is still the subject of controversy, as to its commencement and end, that therefore the period itself is uncertain, equivocal and unintelligible?

I might proceed to offer some remarks on Mr. Penn's notion respecting the thousand years mentioned in Rev. xx. and his mode of explaining the prophecies regarding the conversion and restoration of the Jews; but I should thereby be led into too wide a field of discussion. I shall however very briefly place before the reader, some of the consequences which flow from Mr. Penn's scheme of the Millennium. According to his theory, when Innocent III. preached a crusade for the extirpation of the Albigenses and Waldenses, when the Inquisition kindled throughout Catholic Europe the flames of persecution, when the fires were lighted in Smithfield, when the festival of St. Bartholomew in France was dyed with streams of protestant blood, at all these periods Satan was chained in the bottomless pit, and all these events are included in the Millennium which he would substitute for the opinion, which, with whatsoever variation of subordinate circumstances, is generally received in the protestant church, an opinion which the author of the Chris-

tian's Survey classes with "*the decoys of system and* "*the fascinations of fancy !*"

Mr. Penn further treats the sentiment, that the Roman empire is to be broken in Palestine, as a *fond vision,* and the generally received exposition of the prophecies respecting the restoration of Israel, as a *Judaizing fiction.* But let him not forget, that both these opinions were entertained by one of the profoundest scriptural critics, and most sagacious interpreters of prophecy, that the last or any other age ever produced; I mean the late Bishop Horsley. If Mr. Penn instead of calling these opinions hard names, had offered scriptural arguments against them, he would probably have found some at least among their numerous advocates, prepared to meet him, and to discuss with a calm and Christian spirit, the foundation of their own speculations on these high subjects. But we must protest against either Jerome or Augustine, or any of the fathers, being cited as *authorities* in interpreting prophecies, which were unfulfilled in their time. With these remarks I shall take my leave of Mr. Penn, assuring him how much pleasure it affords me in any instance to agree with him, which I cordially do, in his practical remarks upon an event which I no less than he believe to be near at hand, the second advent of our Lord. Would that Christians could always agree in all things! But since this cannot be in the present

imperfect state of our knowledge, and diseased condition of our moral powers, let us at least endeavour to infuse into our warfare, as large a share as may be of a courteous spirit of Christian chivalry, by imbibing more and more of the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

It only remains for me to add, that in this edition of my work will be found an engraving, which may, I hope, assist the reader to understand my scheme of interpretation.

April 23, 1817.

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EXPLANATION OF THE PLATE.

To prevent misconception I shall first state, that this Plate is not designed to represent the form or shape of the book with seven seals, seen by the Apostle, Rev. v. 1, but only its chronological arrangement and proportions, and the relative places of the different visions.

I wish to hazard no positive conjecture with respect to the form of the book, but I think it probable that it consisted of seven distinct rolls enveloped one under the other, the seventh being the inmost one.

The representation of the Apocalyptic prophecies here given, is founded upon the simple principle, that the whole of the book, from the beginning of chap. vi. to the end, is included within the seven seals. The idea of a separate codicil, or little book, is rejected, as having no existence but in the imaginations of commentators.

The first six seals are represented by the same number of semicircles, following each other in chronological succession. The seventh seal is supposed to be commensurate in time with the whole of the preceding six, and is represented by a semicircle whose diameter is equal to the whole diameters of the other six.

If the idea of a codicil be rejected, I believe it will be found impossible to give a representation of the Apocalypse consistent with truth, without carrying the seventh seal back to the beginning of the prophecy; for the vision of the woman, seen in chap. xii. confessedly belongs to the

earliest age of the Church ; and that vision, if the codicil be discarded, must be placed in the seventh seal.

The remaining parts of the plate explain themselves. I shall only add, that I disclaim any merit of originality in attempting to represent the Apocalyptical periods by a series of semicircles. I borrowed the idea from a plate in Medes' Commentary; but, of course, my arrangement widely differs from his.

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A

DISSERTATION,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST FIVE SEALS.

THE sixth chapter of the Apocalypse contains an account of the opening of six of the seals of the book, which had been exhibited to the eyes of the apostle John in the preceding chapter. The first four seals shew to us the same number of hieroglyphics, each of which is sufficiently distinguished from the rest, by its appropriate characters, to mark that they all relate to different events: but yet, as all the four hieroglyphics are evidently homogeneous, or of the same kind, they must, according to the just principles of interpretation, be applied to objects of the same nature.

Most interpreters have lost sight of this principle in expounding the prophecy of the seals; for while there is a pretty general agreement among them, in referring the first seal to the victorious progress of pure Christianity, in the primitive age

real personages. But we shall not find it easy to fix upon any real characters in history, answering to the description of the riders in the second, third, or fourth seals. We seem, therefore, to be irresistibly driven to the conclusion, that these riders are hieroglyphical representations of things future; and in order to preserve that consistency of interpretation which is necessary to lead us to the successful elucidation of this mysterious book, we must also, I think, conclude, that the character, exhibited to us in the first seal, is, like those of the subsequent visions, wholly hieroglyphical; and we are thus obliged to reject the idea that the rider on the white horse is the Messiah in person.*

There is, indeed, a rider upon a white horse in a subsequent part of this book, who is not a symbolical, but a real personage.† But it is observable, that it is there expressly declared who the horseman is, in order that we may fall into no mistakes respecting it; and I see no sufficient reason for the conclusion which has been drawn by many writers, from some circumstances of similarity, between the two riders, that they are one and the same.

* Archdeacon Woodhouse seems to be sensible that the rider on the white horse cannot, with certainty, be pronounced to be the Son of God.—"We are not yet warranted," says the learned writer, "to "say that this horseman is the Son of God." Again, "The progress "of the white horse seems to be rather that of the Christian religion "in its primitive purity, from the time that its divine founder left it "on earth under the conduct of the apostles." On the Apocalypse, page 131.

† Rev. xix. 11.

THE SECOND SEAL.

On the opening of the second seal, an hieroglyphical representation of a most significant nature presented itself to the eyes of the apostle: "There went out another horse, red, (or fire-"coloured) and it was given to him that sat "thereon to take peace from the earth, and that "they should kill one another; and there was given "unto him a great sword." *

Fire and a sword are both emblems of discord or dissension, as we may learn from our Lord's expressions in Luke xii. 49. and Matthew x. 34. 36. In the former of these passages our Saviour says, "I am come to send fire on the earth, and "what will I if it be already kindled." In the passage last mentioned his words are, "Think not "that I am come to send peace on earth; I "came not to send peace, but a sword. For I "am come to set a man at variance against his "father, and the daughter against her mother, "and the daughter in law, against her mother in "law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own "household."

From the whole of this passage of Matthew, and also by comparing the quotation from Luke with the context, it will be sufficiently evident to the attentive reader, that the *fire* and *sword*, which our Lord came to send on the earth, signify those fierce animosities and disputes, which his gospel, peaceable and heavenly as it is in itself, would, through the wickedness of mankind, and their opposition to the

* Rev. vi. 4.

truth, be instrumental in kindling. The fiery colour of the second horse, when joined to the description of the office of his rider, and of the dreadful weapon with which he was armed, indicate to us, that after the first and purest age of Christianity, the spirit of love and peace should recede from the visible church, and be succeeded by a spirit of discord, of dissension and controversy, a fierce and fiery zeal, instigating Christians to destroy one another.

The ecclesiastical history of the fourth and fifth centuries, sufficiently evinces, that such a change did take place, in the general features of character, which distinguished the Christian church. The schism of the Donatists and the Arian controversy, filled the Roman empire, with the most dreadful and destructive animosities. So much had the Christians of that age imbibed this spirit, that even the disputes occasioned by the election of a bishop in the see of Rome became, in the latter part of the fourth century, the source of a dangerous schism, and a civil war in the city of Rome, which was carried on with the utmost barbarity and fury, and produced the most cruel massacres and desolations.*

The historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, in summing up the history of the ecclesiastical divisions between the years 312 and 361, uses the following words: "The simple narrative of the intestine divisions which distracted the peace and dishonoured the *triumph* of the church, will confirm the remark of a pagan historian, and justify the complaint of a venerable bishop. The experience of Ammianus had con-

* Mosheim, Cent. IV. part ii. chap. 2.

"vinced him, that the enmity of the Christians "towards each other surpassed the fury of savage "beasts against man; and Gregory Nazianzen "most pathetically laments that the kingdom of "heaven was converted by discord into the image of "chaos, of a nocturnal tempest, and of hell itself."*

In how striking a manner does the foregoing description mark the fulfilment of the vision of the second seal! and what a strong proof is here afforded of the depravity and wickedness of human nature, that the pure and heavenly doctrine of the gospel, should be so perverted, within the short space of three centuries, as to become the occasion of such enormities!

THE THIRD SEAL.

On the opening of the third seal the beloved apostle beheld "a black horse, and he that sat on "him having a yoke (ζυγον) in his hand: And I "heard a voice in the midst of the four living "creatures say, a chœnix of wheat for a penny, and "three chœnices of barley for a penny, and see "thou injure not the wine and the oil."†

To Archdeacon Woodhouse belongs the merit of having pointed out, the erroneousness of the translation of the word ζυγος, in our authorised version. The proper and primary meaning of this word is, as the Archdeacon justly remarks, "a yoke," and it is only in a borrowed or secondary sense that it can be taken to signify "a balance."‡

The black colour of the horse under this seal is

* Gibbon, chap. xxi. † Rev. vi. 5, 6.

‡ Woodhouse on the Apocalypse, p. 143-4. See also Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, on the word Ζυγος.

emblematical of darkness and ignorance. The yoke in the hand of his rider, is a symbol denoting the imposition of an oppressive burthen of rites, ceremonies, and human ordinances on the disciples of Christ, and the teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. The word ζυγος is frequently used in this sense in the New Testament. In reference to the attempt made to impose the observance of the law of Moses on the Gentile converts, we find the Apostle Peter, in Acts xv. 10. thus expressing himself: "Why tempt ye God to put a "yoke on the necks of the disciples, which neither "our fathers nor we were able to bear?" St. Paul also exhorts the Galatians, v. 1: "Stand fast there-"fore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us "free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of "bondage:" meaning by this yoke, as is plain from the context, the imposition of the rite of circumcision and observance of the Mosaical law.

The chænix of wheat was a measure containing as much as to supply a slender allowance for the daily food of a man; and the denarius, or penny, was the daily pay of a labouring man.* But as the labouring man has to provide himself with many other things besides bread, it must be accounted a period of great scarcity when his whole daily wages are required to purchase a slender portion of food. Sixteen or twenty chænices of wheat were sold for the denarius, or penny, in plentiful times; and when only one chænix could be had for that price, there must have been a great scarcity, or rather a famine. The voice from the midst of the

* See Archdeacon Woodhouse *in loco*, from whom the whole of this exposition is adopted.

living creatures in this seal, that a chænix of wheat should be had for a penny, and three chænices of barley for a penny, is therefore indicative of severe scarcity or famine; and as the prophecies of the seals relate not to temporal, but to spiritual things, the famine which is here predicted is doubtless a famine or scarcity of the word of God, such as is mentioned in the book of Samuel: "And the "word of the Lord was precious (or rare) in those "days; there was no open vision:"* and by the prophet Amos, "Behold the days come, saith the "Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land; "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but "of hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall "wander from sea to sea, and from the north even "to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the "word of the Lord, and shall not find it."†

But the voice adds these remarkable words: "See "thou hurt not the wine and the oil." By wine and oil, we are probably to understand, those comforting and sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God, which are imparted only to true believers, while the word and ordinances, are dispensed to all, within the pale of the visible church, whether they be nominal professors or real disciples. The prohibition to injure the wine and oil signifies, therefore, that even in the midst of the spiritual famine of the word and ordinances of God, which should peculiarly distinguish the period of this seal, those who truly feared God, should still have an abundant share of the comforting, and sanctifying, and illuminating influences of the Holy Ghost, to support

* 1 Sam. iii. 1. † Amos viii. 11, 12.

them under every discouraging and trying circumstance. The above prohibition is analogous to the triumphant declaration of the apostle Paul, that "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

To recapitulate the contents of this seal: The black colour of the horse, the yoke with which his rider was armed, the proclamation from the midst of the living creatures, that a chænix of wheat should be sold for a penny, and three chænices of barley for a penny, and the prohibition to hurt the oil and wine, unite in pointing out to us a period, when the grossest darkness and ignorance, should overspread the visible church; when a burthensome yoke of rites and ceremonies, and likewise of unscriptural articles of faith, should be imposed upon the necks and consciences of men; when there should be a great want and a famine of the preaching and ordinances of the true gospel in the church: but when notwithstanding this complicated train of evils, the consolations of the Spirit, his enlightening influences compared to oil,† and his gladdening and comforting influences likened to wine,‡ should not be withheld from those, who in the midst of surrounding darkness and superstition, truly set their hearts to seek God.

This prophecy was accomplished in the rise and

* Rom. viii. 38, 39. † 1 John ii. 20. 27.
‡ Zechariah x. 7. Ephes. v. 18.

prevalence of the papal power. Even as early as the fifth century, ignorance and superstition had made much progress in obscuring the pure light of the gospel;* and these evils gradually increased till they ended in almost banishing that light from the Christian world. The period during which they prevailed has been emphatically called the dark ages, and the spiritual bondage under which mankind then groaned, is known by the significant appellation of the papal yoke. During these ages of ignorance and superstition, the Scriptures were hidden from the eyes of the people; the worship of the Virgin Mary, of saints and their images, and of the bones of dead men, were substituted for the service of God and of Christ. A burthensome yoke of rites and ceremonies, of mortifications, penances, and celibacy, was imposed on men. Yet in the midst of this darkness an obscure ray of light sometimes illumined the spiritual horizon: a few faithful and enlightened men in every age were raised up by Divine Providence to bear testimony against the universal corruption,† to whom were vouchsafed the influences of the Spirit, the wine and oil, in rich abundance. This light burst forth with increased and inextinguishable splendour at the era of the Reformation, and seems, in the present eventful period, to be extending its benign influence to those parts of the world hitherto unblest with the knowledge of Revelation. Thus has the command not to hurt the wine and oil, received its accomplishment in every period of the church.

* Mosheim, Cent. V. part ii. chap. 4.

† See Milner's History of the Church of Christ, *passim*.

THE FOURTH SEAL.

"I BEHELD, and lo! a pale livid green horse, and "his name that sat upon him was Death, and Hell "followed with him: and power was given unto "them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill "with the sword, and with hunger, and with "death, and with the beasts of the earth."*

The word used to express the colour of the horse under this seal, which is rendered "pale" in our authorised translation, signifies, as Archdeacon Woodhouse remarks, a *grassy-green* hue, which, though beautiful in the clothing of the trees and fields, is very unseemly, disgusting, and even horrible when it appears upon flesh; it is there the livid colour of corruption.

This pale livid green colour of this horse is emblematical of a state of things even more dreadful than that of the preceding seal. The character of his rider corresponds with this idea; his name is called death, the king of terrors. He is followed by Hell, not the place of punishment for the wicked, but the general receptacle of departed souls, which is the usual meaning of the word ἅδης, and in which sense it is used in that article of the apostles' creed regarding the descent of our Lord into hell.—Hell and Death are here personified.

The whole assemblage of figures constitutes an hieroglyphical representation, of the most horrible and terrific nature, and points out to us a period when the rulers of the visible church should seem to lose the character of men, and to assume that of

* Rev. vi. 7, 8.

malignant demons and savage beasts, and should extirpate, by fire and sword, all who dared to prefer death to the sacrifice of a good conscience. This seal evidently represents the state of the church during those ages, when the flames of persecution were kindled by the papal power, to destroy all who refused obedience to its tyrannical authority, and who pretended to judge for themselves in matters of religion. Early in the thirteenth century, Pope Innocent III. addressed himself to Philip Augustus, King of France, and to the leading men of that nation, soliciting them, by the alluring promises of the most ample indulgences, to extirpate all heretics by fire and sword. Shortly afterwards a crusade was proclaimed in the name of the pope, against the heretics throughout the kingdom of France. An army of cross-bearers took the field against the Albigenses, and commenced a war, which was carried on with the utmost cruelty, and ended in the subjection or extirpation of that religious body in the southern provinces of France. About this time also the dreadful tribunal of the inquisition was instituted, which, in the thirteenth and following centuries, subdued a prodigious number of those who were called heretics, part of whom were converted to the church by terror, and the rest committed to the flames.*

The persecutions of the church of Rome against the servants of Christ continued, with unabated fury, down to the period of the revocation of the edict of Nantz, in every part of Europe where the secular powers consented to be made subservient to

* Mosheim, Cent. XIII. part ii. chap. 5.

this dreadful tyranny. It is computed, that in the war against the Albigenses and Waldenses, in the fourteenth century, *a million* of men were destroyed. From the beginning of the order of the Jesuits to the year 1580, it is said that *nine hundred thousand* men perished. One hundred and fifty thousand were destroyed by the inquisition in thirty years.* The ferocious Duke of Alva is reported to have boasted, that during his government of the Netherlands, in the short space of five years and a half, upwards of *eighteen thousand* heretics had suffered by the hand of the public executioner, besides a much greater number whom he had put to the sword in the towns he had taken, and in the field of battle.† At the memorable massacre of St. Bartholomew, several thousands of protestants were destroyed at Paris, in the space of three or four days, by all the varieties of cruel deaths that the most unbounded malice could invent. The same scenes were acted in other cities of France, so that in the space of two months, thirty thousand protestants were butchered in cold blood.‡ During the dreadful persecution in France, in the reign of Lewis XIV. five hundred thousand protestants were driven into banishment, in the space of a few years, and the prisons and galleys were filled with those, who were stopped in their flight. About four hundred thousand still remained in the kingdom. They were compelled to go to mass and communicate. Some, who rejected the host after having

* Mede, Comment. Apocalyptic. ad cap. xiii.

† Watson's Reign of Philip II. vol. i. p. 392.

‡ Modern Universal History, vol. xxiv. p. 273.

received it, were condemned to be burnt alive.* Such of the protestant ministers as returned to the kingdom, after having quitted it, were condemned to the gallows or to the rack.†

Thus did the rulers of the visible church assume the character of Death, accompanied by Hell, or Hades; and in this manner was the symbolical import of the cadaverous and putrid colour of the horse under the fourth seal fulfilled, in the cruel and bloody persecutions which desolated the Christian world during the space of four centuries.

THE FIFTH SEAL.

"I saw under the altar the souls of them that "were slain for the word of God, and for the testi- "mony which they held; and they cried with a loud "voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, "dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them "that dwell on the earth? And white robes were "given unto every one of them, and it was said "unto them, that they should rest yet for a little "season, until their fellow-servants also, and their

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XIV.

† Voltaire, in giving an account of these dreadful scenes of cruelty, makes the following striking remark: "C'était un étrange contraste, "que du sein d'une cour voluptueuse, où regnaient la douceur de "mœurs, les graces, les charmes de la société, il partit des ordres si "durs et impitoyables." He afterwards quotes the following passage from the letters of the Marquis de Louvois, the minister of Lewis. "Sa majesté veut qu'on fasse éprouver les dernières rigueurs à ceux "qui ne voudront pas se faire de sa religion; et ceux qui auront la "sotte gloire de vouloir demeurer les derniers, doivent être poussés "jusqu'à la dernière extrémité." Vide Siècle de Louis XIV.

"brethren that should be killed, as they were, "should be fulfilled."*

The language of this seal, as well as of the preceding ones, must be considered as hieroglyphical. The souls of those slain for their adherence to the faith of Christ, are seen lying under the altar of burnt offerings, and crying for vengeance against their persecutors. This emblem is explanatory of the nature of the slaughter perpetrated under the preceding seals, and particularly the fourth, and it shews that the true Church of God was the peculiar object, against which Death and Hades in that seal had directed their dreadful instruments of destruction. It therefore confirms the application of that seal and all the prior ones to the history of the Church, and strengthens the arguments by which I have endeavoured to prove that they have no relation to the secular affairs of the Roman empire.

The foregoing emblem displays to us, in the next place, the consequences of the persecutions under the former seals. It seems descriptive of the aspect of the Church immediately before the dawn of the Reformation. About the commencement of the fifteenth century, history represents the Roman Pontiffs as having slumbered in a state of perfect tranquillity, entirely unconscious of the storm that was approaching. The Albigenses and Waldenses had been almost extirpated. The feeble remnants of these intrepid witnesses for the Gospel of Jesus Christ were reduced to total silence; and the Roman See appeared to reign in undisturbed and uncontroulable sovereignty over the Christian

* Rev. vi. 9—11.

world.* To such a state of things the hieroglyphical representation with which the seal opens seems appropriately to belong.—It represented to the view of the Apostle John, the souls of the slain martyrs as being at that time the most prominent object; all as it were that remained visible to his eyes of the Church of Christ. The whole scene bore the stillness of death, interrupted only by the loud cries of the slaughtered saints.

To these slain witnesses white robes were given, which are emblematical of innocence, purity, and justification, through Christ. They were told also to rest yet a little season, till their fellow servants also and their brethren, which should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. This I conceive to be a continuation of the symbolical representation. It seems to place before us that improved condition of the Church which was the consequence of the Reformation, when the Protestants in a considerable part of Europe obtained not only a complete toleration, but were acknowledged as a religious body; and in England, Scotland, and other countries, gained even a more signal victory over the Romish Church. But yet it is intimated that this state, however improved, was one of hope and expectation, rather than of joy. The cause of the Church was yet unavenged. The promises of her future glory remained unaccomplished, and it was therefore necessary that the servants of God should arm themselves with the faith and patience of the saints, during the remaining period of trial allotted to them

* Mosheim, Cent. XVI. Hist. of Reformation, chap. i. Milner's Hist. of the Church, Cent. XVI. chap. i.

before the triumphant reign of their Lord. The second part of this seal thus explained seems to fill up the interval between the Reformation and the Sixth Seal and Seventh Trumpet, when the cries of the martyred saints are completely answered, and the overwhelming judgments of God are poured forth on their enemies.*

* The learned Vitringa gives an explanation of this seal very similar to the above.

CHAPTER II.

THE SIXTH SEAL.

"And I beheld, when he had opened the sixth "seal; and lo there was a great earthquake, and "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and "the moon became as blood; and the stars of "heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree "casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a "mighty wind: and the heavens departed as a scroll "when it is rolled together; and every mountain "and island were moved out of their places: and "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and "the rich men, and the chief captains, and the "mighty men, and every bondman, and every free-"man hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks "of the mountains; and said to the mountains, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that "sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the "Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, "and who shall be able to stand?"*

In the hieroglyphical language of prophecy, the natural universe is used as a symbol of the political world; hence it follows, that a great earthquake denotes a mighty revolution in the world politic. The sun and moon, being the symbols of the sovereign or imperial power, their obscuration, the sun becoming black as a sackcloth of hair, and the moon becoming as blood, signify the extinction of the imperial power, or its ceasing to exert a benefi-

* Rev. vi. 12—17.

cial influence on the affairs of men.* The stars denote sovereign princes, subordinate to the imperial power, or else nobles and great men.† Their falling to the ground, like the unripe fruit of a fig-tree when shaken by a mighty wind, signifies the dethroning of the sovereigns of states, and the degradation of their princes and nobles, by means of sudden and violent political convulsions. The heaven or firmament, in the natural world, is the medium through which the sun, moon, and stars, communicate to us their heat, and light, and influences. Consequently the symbolical heaven must be that in the world politic, through which the symbolical sun and other luminaries act upon us; i. e. the political constitutions and governments of the empires and kingdoms of the world. The passing away of the heaven, therefore, denotes the utter subversion and destruction of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the empire, which is the subject of the prophecy. Mountains and islands denote kingdoms and states. When it is said that the mountains and islands are moved out of their places, it denotes the subversion and removal of the kingdoms and states of the world, politic. The rest of the language of this remarkable passage is so literal as to require little illustration. It is descriptive of the dreadful consternation which shall overwhelm the princes and rulers of the world, during the progress of the terrific convulsions of this seal; and it shews that they shall at length be forced to yield to the conviction of

* Faber on the 1260 years, vol. i. chap. 2.

† See, in illustration of the symbolical language, Jacob's interpretation of Joseph's dream, Gen. xxxvii. 9, 10.

the approach of that awful day of visitation of the wrath of God, of which we so often read in the prophetical scriptures.

In the prophecy of Joel we are informed, that "the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the "moon into blood, before the great and terrible "day of the Lord come." * Our Lord, in his remarkable discourse upon the destruction of the temple, and the signs of his second advent in the clouds of heaven, predicts these signs in the following language. "Immediately after the tribu-"lation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and "the moon shall not give her light, and the stars "shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the "heaven shall be shaken: and then shall ap-"pear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: "and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, "and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the "clouds of heaven with power and great glory." † The language of Mark is nearly similar. Luke somewhat varies the description, and connects, in a chronological manner, the signs in the heavens, which go before our Lord's second advent, with the preceding parts of the prophecy. "They (the "Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and "shall be led away captive into all nations: and "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, "and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of "nations, with perplexity; the sea, and the waves "roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and

* Joel ii. 31. † Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

"for looking after those things which are coming "on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be "shaken. And then shall they see the Son of "Man coming in a cloud, with power and great "glory. And when these things begin to come to "pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for "your redemption draweth nigh."* Luke here tells us, not only that these signs in the symbolical heavens shall occur previously to the second advent of Christ, but also that they are to happen precisely at the period when "the times of the Gentiles "are fulfilled." The meaning of this expression will be investigated in a subsequent part of this work.

The passages quoted from Joel and the Evangelists, are so exactly similar in their import and form of expression, that there is little reason to doubt that they refer to the same events; and it is apparent that they describe a dreadful series of political revolutions, which shall convulse the nations of the world before the great and dreadful day of the Lord, the day of the second advent. And if we carefully compare the language in which the earthquake, and celestial signs of the sixth seal are described, with what is written, as above, in the prophecy of Joel and the Evangelists, we shall see so near an agreement, as cannot but lead us to think that all these inspired writers, in the passages which have been cited, describe the same catastrophe; and, consequently, that the earthquake of the sixth seal relates also to the great revolution which is to take place in the last ages. But, as it has very

* Luke xxi. 24—28.

incongruously been supposed by Mede, Bishop Newton, and the great body of modern commentators, that this seal was fulfilled by the change which took place in the established religion and government of the Roman empire, in the time of Constantine, it may be necessary to make some remarks, by way of refutation of this commonly received interpretation.

The hieroglyphics of the sixth seal, are of too august a nature to be applied to the events which happened on the accession of Constantine. It is said, "And lo there was a great earthquake, and the "sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the "moon became as blood." These symbols indicate a mighty revolution, including in it the complete extinction or obscuration of the imperial dignity. It is true that, in the person of Constantine, the imperial dignity of Rome, passed from the Heathen emperors, to a new line professing the Christian faith. But that dignity itself was neither extinguished nor obscured by this event: on the contrary, it shone forth with increased splendour, after the defeat and death of the rivals of Constantine. Momentous in its consequences, therefore, as the above change confessedly was, it yet seems inconsistent with the just rules of interpretation, to apply to it a symbolical description, which denotes the complete subversion of the supreme power in the empire which is the subject of the prophecy.*

* I shall afterwards endeavour to shew, that the revolution in the reign of Constantine, was signified by the earthquake in Rev. viii. 5, and by the fall of the sixth head of the beast and rise of the seventh, xvii. 10.

It is next said, "And the stars of heaven fell unto "the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely "figs when shaken of a mighty wind." This symbol is equally inapplicable to the events of the above period. The rivals of Constantine, who were defeated and dethroned by him, were sharers in the imperial power. Now this power, though administered by more than one person, was, by the constitution of the empire, always considered as one and undivided; it must therefore be represented by the sun, and not by the subordinate symbol of stars. The fall of the stars from heaven to the earth, could not therefore denote the fall of the Heathen emperors, and seems to be more fitly applicable to some revolution in the Roman empire, at a period when there is in it, not only one supreme imperial dignity, but an indefinite number of regal powers, sharing among them the territories of the empire; recognizing indeed the superior lustre of the emperor, but exercising within their own territories all the rights of independent sovereignty. Such was the political form of the western empire before the French revolution: but that form no longer exists. The stars which then shone in the heavens politic have disappeared: they have been cast down from their orbits by sudden and awful violence; even as the fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

* Since this was written another mighty alteration has been effected in the state of Europe. The fabric of the revolutionary governments on the Continent has been overthrown, and a new arrangement effected, partly on the ancient and partly on a new basis, which has been produced by the changes of the revolution. I see, however, no good reason to retract what I advanced in my first edition on this

The same reasoning may be applied to show, that the remaining symbols of the sixth seal cannot, any more than those which have been considered, be referred to the revolution in the time of Constantine. The heaven, or political constitution and government of the Roman empire, did not then pass away, nor did the mountains and islands, the kingdoms and states, remove from their places. In fact, there were at that time no independent kingdoms and states within the limits of the empire; it formed one undivided kingdom or mountain.

I am happy to have it in my power to support the above reasoning by the authority of Vitringa, whose arguments on the subject are accurately abridged as follows by the author of the Illustrations of Prophecy: "In the time of Constantine, the civil "government was not overturned. It is true," says Vitringa, "some emperors were divested of their "power. But in this there was nothing new or "singular. The same rank and the same title "which Constantine had wrested from his rivals, he "himself continued to retain. '*The imagery of "the sixth seal exhibits to us the change and sub-"version of the state of some empire, which should "be accomplished with a sudden shaking and the "most violent commotion.*' But the alterations in-"troduced by Constantine, were executed in a "period of profound peace; and there was nothing "in them that corresponded to the figures of the

subject. The present state of Europe seems to me to resemble an edifice, hastily built with loose stones, without mortar or cement I still believe that we are in the midst of the last great earthquake. February, 1817.

"prophet. In the subversion of paganism the "Christian emperor did," says Vitringa, "proceed "with moderation and with caution. Many of its "temples and its shrines continued untouched; the "art of divination was still publicly practised; their "estates, their salaries, their privileges, still remained "in the hands of the vestals, and the priests, and the "hierophants, in the greater cities, and especially "at Rome, where an altar stood to the honour of "the goddess Victory. Public sacrifices were per-"mitted; and a large proportion of the Roman "senate, many years after the time of Constantine, "continued in the belief, and persevered in the pa-"tronage, of the heathen superstitions. Do these, "and other things which I omit, answer to the "imagery of the sixth seal? Whilst men addicted "to the idolatry of paganism were every where "promoted to the highest dignities of the state, at "a time when Christian emperors held the reins of "government; had they any necessity to say to the "mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide "us from the wrath of the Lamb? Was paganism "subverted with violence and a mighty commotion, "when, long after the time of Constantine, it sub-"sisted and flourished in the principal cities of the "empire?"

In further confirmation of the arguments of Vitringa, it may be mentioned, that the seven first Christian emperors continued to accept, without hesitation, the title, the ensigns, and prerogatives, of sovereign pontiff of the pagan rites, which had been instituted by Numa, and assumed by Augustus.*

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall, cap. xxi.

The foregoing reasoning seems sufficiently to refute the common interpretation of the sixth seal; and the whole imagery of it shows, when compared with various other passages of the prophetical writers, particularly those above quoted from Joel and the Evangelists,* that it relates to that great and final revolution which is to agitate and convulse the nations of Christendom before the second advent of our Lord with the clouds of heaven. Indeed no other application of this seal, will either correspond with its sublime and terrific imagery, or its place in the chronology of the Apocalypse; for we have seen, that the fourth seal leads us down to the period of the great persecutions by the papal power, and that the fifth seal contains the promise of a day of retribution for the blood of the saints, when the number of those who were to die as martyrs for the faith should be completed. Having read this promise, when we afterwards peruse the account of the sixth seal, it is quite natural to apply it to the promised day of recompence, but altogether forced and unnatural to turn back to the times of Constantine for its accomplishment. Indeed, in what possible sense can it be said, that the number of the martyrs was completed in the times of Constantine, when the greatest and most bloody persecutions of the faithful disciples of Christ did not take place till about eight centuries afterwards?

The sixth seal must therefore be applied to that main revolution, as it is termed by Sir Isaac Newton,

* See also Isaiah xxxiv. 4—8; which evidently refers to the destruction of the anti-christian powers, and in which the same language is used as in the sixth seal.

which is immediately to precede the establishment of the glorious kingdom of Christ upon earth. This revolution is predicted by the prophet Daniel, under the symbol of the coming of the Ancient of Days, and the sitting of the judgment; the slaying of the fourth beast, and the giving of his body to the burning flame.* These events happen immediately before the coming of the Son of Man, with the clouds of heaven, to receive that glorious kingdom, of which we read so much in the writings of the prophets. The scene of this revolution is therefore to be sought for within the body of the fourth beast, or in those kingdoms which formed the Western Roman Empire. It is the same revolution which is again mentioned in the Apocalypse, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet,† and more particularly described under the seventh vial,‡ between which and the sixth seal there is a most remarkable similarity.

The principle of this exposition of the earthquake of the sixth seal is of a very remote antiquity. "That "it predicted the great events which were to happen "at the destruction of Antichrist, was the opinion of "Victorinus, of Andrew, and of Arethas, whose "commentaries on the Revelation are still extant. "The first of these filled the episcopal see of Pettaw, "in Austria, and suffered martyrdom under Diocle-"tian; the second, about the close of the fifth "century, was bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia; "and the last is supposed to have been bishop of the "same see in the succeeding century."§ Vitringa thus quotes the sentiments of Arethas: "On con-

* Dan. vii. 9—14. † Rev. xi. 19. ‡ Ib. xvi. 17—21.
§ Illustrations of Prophecy, chap. xxiii.

"sidering this matter, Arethas, after saying that "some interpreters refer these emblems to the "overthrow of the Jewish state, excellently observes, "*Though it be most true that these things were so,* "*yet they shall be more completely fulfilled at the* "*coming of Antichrist; not in the quarter of* "*Judea only, but in the whole world.* This (says Vitringa) he "afterwards confirms by the sym- "bols of the four winds, which shall in that time "concur to produce this great catastrophe of "things." In like manner, the same learned writer quotes the sentiments of Victorinus, expressed in the following laconic but decisive sentence; "*This* "*is the last persecution;*" by which he means the persecution of "Antichrist." Now it is well known, that the ancient fathers connected the coming of Antichrist with the last times, and imagined, that the second advent of our Lord was to take place immediately after the revelation of Antichrist. According to this view, therefore, any event which was placed by them at the coming of Antichrist, was immediately and indissolubly associated, in their minds, with the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

Having thus seen, that the commonly received interpretation of the sixth seal is erroneous, and that it refers not to any thing that took place in the time of Constantine, but to the final revolution which is to precede the second advent of our Lord, I shall defer the further consideration of the first part of that seal till we arrive at the seventh trumpet, and the seven vials of wrath, in which the revolution of the sixth seal is more particularly described. In the mean while I remark, that it appears to me,

cial influence on the affairs of men.* The stars denote sovereign princes, subordinate to the imperial power, or else nobles and great men.† Their falling to the ground, like the unripe fruit of a fig-tree when shaken by a mighty wind, signifies the dethroning of the sovereigns of states, and the degradation of their princes and nobles, by means of sudden and violent political convulsions. The heaven or firmament, in the natural world, is the medium through which the sun, moon, and stars, communicate to us their heat, and light, and influences. Consequently the symbolical heaven must be that in the world politic, through which the symbolical sun and other luminaries act upon us; i. e. the political constitutions and governments of the empires and kingdoms of the world. The passing away of the heaven, therefore, denotes the utter subversion and destruction of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the empire, which is the subject of the prophecy. Mountains and islands denote kingdoms and states. When it is said that the mountains and islands are moved out of their places, it denotes the subversion and removal of the kingdoms and states of the world, politic. The rest of the language of this remarkable passage is so literal as to require little illustration. It is descriptive of the dreadful consternation which shall overwhelm the princes and rulers of the world, during the progress of the terrific convulsions of this seal; and it shews that they shall at length be forced to yield to the conviction of

* Faber on the 1260 years, vol. i. chap. 2.

† See, in illustration of the symbolical language, Jacob's interpretation of Joseph's dream, Gen. xxxvii. 9, 10.

the approach of that awful day of visitation of the wrath of God, of which we so often read in the prophetical scriptures.

In the prophecy of Joel we are informed, that "the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the "moon into blood, before the great and terrible "day of the Lord come." * Our Lord, in his remarkable discourse upon the destruction of the temple, and the signs of his second advent in the clouds of heaven, predicts these signs in the following language. "Immediately after the tribu-"lation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and "the moon shall not give her light, and the stars "shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the "heaven shall be shaken: and then shall ap-"pear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: "and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, "and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the "clouds of heaven with power and great glory." † The language of Mark is nearly similar. Luke somewhat varies the description, and connects, in a chronological manner, the signs in the heavens, which go before our Lord's second advent, with the preceding parts of the prophecy. "They (the "Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and "shall be led away captive into all nations: and "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And "there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, "and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of "nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves "roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and

* Joel ii. 31. † Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.

" on the four corners of the earth, and holding the
" four winds of the earth, that the wind should not
" blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.
" And I saw another angel ascending from the east
" (the rising of the sun), having the seal of the
" living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the
" four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the
" earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth,
" neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed
" the servants of our God in their foreheads."*

The wind, when it rages with unrestrained fury, is an element little less destructive than fire itself. The wind, therefore, is a fit and proper emblem of destruction, or of divine judgments. It is thus used in various passages of scripture. " Upon the wicked
" he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an
" horrible tempest."† " Behold, the whirlwind of
" the Lord goeth forth with fury; a consuming
" whirlwind: It shall fall with pain upon the head of
" the wicked."‡

In the order of the narrative this vision follows the earthquake of the sixth seal, and we may hence infer, that the earthquake begins before the holding of the winds by the four angels. But, on the other hand, we learn from Rev. vi. 17. that the earthquake reaches to the great day of the Lord; and as it seems evident that the sealing of the servants of God must precede that day; we may hence conclude, that the consummation of the earthquake, is later in point of time than the holding of the four winds of heaven. And it therefore follows that this vision of the holding the winds, must occupy a period of un-

* Rev. vii. 1—3. † Ps. xi. 6. ‡ Jer. xxx. 23.

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defined duration in the midst of the earthquake. It is an hieroglyphical representation, indicating a short interval of universal peace before the end, which is granted for the specific purpose of sealing the servants of God on their foreheads. All things in the Roman earth, are shaken and displaced by the first concussions of the earthquake, which bring the most awful judgments and desolations upon its inhabitants. But, according to the almost invariable analogy of the divine procedure, a term of calm, not perhaps of rest, is at length afforded, previous to the last dreadful shock which is to bring utter destruction upon the wicked.

The emblems of this vision, seem to bear a close resemblance to those of the ninth chapter of Ezekiel; and by comparing it with that passage we discover, that the sealing of the righteous denotes their being marked for preservation from the ruin impending over the world. The mystical number of the sealed is next given. It consists of 12,000 of each of the tribes of Israel; in all 144,000. This number expresses fulness or perfection. It is produced by multiplying 12 into 12, in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel, and the twelve apostles, and by again multiplying the square of 12, or 144, into 1000, in order to describe the faithful as constituting an exceeding great multitude.*

These four angels seem to be the emblems or representations of those powers whom God will employ as his instruments, to restrain the calamities of the earthquake, and thus procure the allotted period of

* Archdeacon Woodhouse *in loco.* Faber on the 1250 years. 5th Ed. chap. x. sect. 5.

universal peace.* When that time is elapsed, they will cease to hold the winds; and the torrent of calamity which had already desolated and is about to overwhelm the Roman earth, shall in consequence be again let loose. It is probably in this sense, that the angels are to "hurt the earth," as the prophets are said to do those things which they merely denounce.†

The sealing which here takes place, is doubtless similar in its substantial characters, to that mentioned in Ephes. i. 13, for in every age of the church, the true members of Christ have been so sealed. But yet, in this concluding act of sealing, there appears to be something more directly and solemnly of a judicial character. The 144,000 are here sealed with an express reference to the calamities that are approaching, in order that they may be set apart as God's property, and saved from the general destruction of the ungodly. It seems scarcely necessary to add, what will naturally occur to the serious reader, that it is the word of God, whether preached or diffused in a written form, which is the great instrument used by the Spirit in sealing the servants of God. The angel from the east, or rising of the sun, I conceive to be our Lord himself; and the seal in his hand, is an emblem of the Spirit which he gives to his servants by the preaching of the word.

In the last chapter, I endeavoured to show that the sixth seal commenced at the period of the French

* By universal peace, I mean universal as it respects the scene of the prophecy. There may at the time be wars in Asia, or America, which countries are not within the limits of the Apocalyptic world.

† See Isai. vi. 9, 10. Jer. i. 10.

revolution: and it seems to me that we now witness the fulfilment of the vision of the holding of the four winds. After more than twenty years of u - ceasing convulsions; and bloodshed unequalled in the past history of the world, peace has at length been obtained by the gigantic efforts of a mighty confederacy of the nations of Europe,* led on by the

* This confederacy is, without question, the greatest which is recorded in history, in the extent of its military resources, and also the remarkable and almost miraculous unity of sentiment which prevailed in its military councils, composed of materials which at first view must have appeared so discordant and heterogeneous. Nothing indeed can account for the unanimity of the allies in their operations in the field, but the supposition of a divine influence presiding over their consultations. The strength of this confederacy, and the views by which it was actuated, will appear by the following passages from the report of Lord Castlereagh's speech in the house of commons, on February 19, 1816, which I copy from the Morning Post newspaper of February 20. "By the means they had employed "they had contributed to bring into the field a confederacy, so great "and powerful that disaster itself could not have frustrated its "ultimate object. Nay, had the battle of Waterloo, instead of "a glorious triumph, proved a day of defeat and ruin, the contest "might have been protracted, but not changed in its termination. "The means of the confederacy were so immense that they could not "fail."——"Never had such a confederacy, in extent of military "strength and ardour of exertion, been witnessed. It appeared, by "returns taken at the time when the British army occupied Paris, that "there was an allied force in the French territory of 1,140,000 men. "The numbers had been most scrupulously checked by the Duke "of Wellington, who was charged with the arrangements with the "French commissioners for their subsistence, and his Grace declared "that the numbers had not been exaggerated."—"Besides the force "brought into action, had the war continued two months longer, "100,000 Austrians, 250,000 Russians, 70,000 Spaniards, and other "contingents, would have entered France, which would then have "contained not less than 1,500,000 foreign troops, combating in the "cause of Europe."

"The late government of France was a military government, it "was wholly and entirely impelled, directed, and led by the army,

four great powers of Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia, which after breaking in pieces the vast

"and obliged to answer to it for all its operations. He felt, that "although we might now look to repose under the arrangements "that had been adopted, it was only by secouding for a length of "time these operations, by the presence of a strong military force. "Unless for the imposing attitude of this body, till the military spirit "of jacobinism was extinct, the peace could not be secure. The "principle on which his Majesty's government felt the question of "war or peace to hinge was, the continuance of an army of the allies "in France. But respecting the dissolution of the army of Bonaparte, "which had now taken place, he should think himself undeserving of "the attention of that House, if he was not prepared to avow, that "his Majesty's government, at the time Lewis XVIII. was at Ghent, "laid it down as a fundamental and positive principle, that that army "should be totally dissolved; and he should have been liable to the "charge of being accessary to the resurrection of that army, if he "had not insisted on its entire extinction. But this grand point was "effected, and it only remained for us to watch over it for a time, in "its state of dissolution; for if any man supposed that it had ceased "to exist, because it no longer existed on parade, he knew nothing of "the deep-rooted principles of jacobinism with which it had been "actuated from the commencement of its disorganizing career."—— "The noble Lord, continuing to descant on the attachment of the "military conspirators to Bonaparte, observed, that he never had been "one of those individuals who had depreciated his abilities; but he "would say, that, if that army had been suffered to exist, it would "have been perfectly unimportant whether Bonaparte were confined "or not, for it would not have been difficult to find a chief who would "soon have led it into its former career."

Did my limits permit me to enlarge these extracts, I might add other passages to shew that the great purpose of this alliance was the conquering and securing peace, and also illustrative of the very remarkable union which existed among the members of the confederacy.

Now we know that the expedition of Xerxes into Greece was the subject of prophecy, see Dan. xi. 2. It cannot therefore be asserted, with any colour of reason, that the mighty confederacy, which has broken the gigantic power of Bonaparte and given peace to the world, is not an event of sufficient magnitude to find a place in the Apocalyptic history, for surely its importance is greater than was

power of the French empire, and twice driving its late sovereign from his throne, now occupies France with its armies, and thus restrains the fire of that revolutionary volcano, which has heretofore been the source of such incalculable calamities to the inhabitants of Europe.

This interval of tranquillity, has also been marked by another circumstance, which precisely corresponds with the description given in the vision. The four winds are held or restrained in order that the servants of God may be sealed, and we have already remarked, that the word of God is the instrument used for this sealing. Now the re-establishment of peace has given occasion to a new activity, and far more widely extended exertions, in circulating the sacred scriptures throughout the European and Asiatic continents, as I shall show more particularly in another part of this volume. The measures taken for these purposes are also evidently upon a scale of such magnitude as to mark that they belong to a period of the extraordinary operations of the Almighty.*

We are no where informed, how long this interval of peace shall continue. But if the interpreta-

that of the expedition of Xerxes. I mention this argument, merely to anticipate an objection which, I foresee, may be made to my interpretation of this vision.

* The vision of the holding of the four winds is, by Bishop Newton, referred to the peace of the church in the reign of Constantine. This is a natural consequence of the common, but as I have shewn erroneous, interpretation of the earthquake, in chap. vi. When it is considered that the triumph of the church at that time was immediately followed by the Arian controversy and the schism of the Donatists, it will be seen how little the language of this passage can justly apply to such a state of things.

tion of the vision which is here given be correct, we may expect, that as soon as the allotted period is past, the commission to hold the winds shall cease, and the calamities of the earthquake shall be renewed with an overwhelming impetus. From these final judgments, which are to bring utter destruction on the Bestial empire, the sealed servants of God are, however, to be delivered, and there are many passages which seem to indicate that their preservation shall be effected by the immediate hand and power of God, exerted in a miraculous manner.* Our Lord assures us, that after the signs in the sun, moon, and stars (which are, as we have seen, parallel with the earthquake of the sixth seal), and at his second advent, he shall send his angels to gather together his elect from the four winds;† and he commands his disciples to watch and pray, that they may be accounted worthy to escape those things which shall come to pass at that period, and to stand before the Son of Man.‡ And since it may be laid down as a principle, that whatever we are commanded or exhorted to pray for, will be granted in answer to prayer, we may infer, that the preservation which the disciples of Christ are directed to make the subject of their supplications, will be vouchsafed to them in the awful period mentioned by our Lord.

The above interpretation of this vision was adopted, before I was acquainted with Vitringa's commentary. I am happy to have it in my power, to confirm my view of the passage, by the authority of that learned

* Joel ii. 31, 32. Isai. lxvi. 14—16. Ps. lxxvi. 8, 9. Mal. iv. 1—3.
† Matt. xxiv. 31. ‡ Luke xxi. 36.

writer, who thus expounds it. "A remarkable ad-
"junct of the judgment shown forth in the emblem
"of the great earthquake is here described, viz.
"the preservation of the elect, professing the pure
"faith of Jesus Christ, from the stupendous calami-
"ties which fall on the enemies of the church, in
"the last time. For although there shall be great
"and terrible commotions in the world: and through-
"out Europe, which shall strike the elect themselves
"with fear, yet the Lord assures them in this vision,
"that he will keep them by his providence, so that
"they shall receive no injury, and that he will
"mercifully preserve his church, which shall shortly
"triumph over all its enemies." Vitringa after-
wards explains *the four winds*, to signify the
awful commotions of the sixth seal. He supposes
that the four angels may denote the princes, who
shall be the authors of these calamities, and adds,
"By this emblem it is signified, that when these
"winds are loosed, and break forth from the clouds,
"the whole European world shall be most violently
"agitated and disturbed. That great empire of
"Europe,* which has opposed itself to true reli-
"gion; the free cities and republics of the empire,
"and the kingdoms of Europe, and the kings,
"princes, and nobles which govern them, shall be
"terribly shaken and suffer damage."

After the vision of the sealing of the elect,
the apostle "beheld, and lo a great multitude,
"which no man could number, of all nations, and
"kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before
"the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with

* The Germanic empire.

"white robes, and palms in their hands; and "cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our "God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the "Lamb." "And one of the elders answered, "saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed "in white robes? and whence came they? And I "said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said "unto me, These are they which came out of the "great tribulation, and have washed their robes, "and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and "serve him day and night in his temple: and he "that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any "more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any "heat: For the Lamb which is in the midst of the "throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto "living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe "away all tears from their eyes."*

We have seen in the sealing of the 144,000, in the preceding passage, an emblem of the certain preservation of the church of Christ from the general destruction during the period of the sixth seal. In the passage now quoted we behold described, in highly figurative, but sublime language, the actual translation of the church, from the great tribulation of that period, into that state of millennial rest promised to her from the earliest ages.

The chronology of this vision is marked by the circumstance, that the palm-bearing multitude are described as "standing before the throne, and "serving God day and night *in his temple*;" that is,

* Rev. ix. 17.

in the inmost recess of the temple, or the holy of holies, in which compartment of the temple the throne of God is placed. Now in the sequel of this prophecy it will be seen, that till the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the temple of God, or holy of holies, remains shut, and is only opened after it sounds.* It will further be discovered, that though the temple of God is opened at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, yet it continues to be so filled with smoke from the glory of God, as to be inaccessible to men till after the fulfilling, or finishing, of the seven plagues of the seven last vials of the wrath of God.† The worship performed *in the temple* by the palm-bearing multitude, must therefore be subsequent to the pouring out of the seven vials. But as these vials end with the destruction of Antichrist, at the battle of Armageddon, the scene of that multitude "clothed in white raiment, with "palms in their hands," must also be subsequent to the destruction of the Anti-christian powers.

By the above chain of reasoning we are led to the conclusion, that the passage now under consideration relates to that illustrious appearance and establishment of the kingdom of our Lord, which is thus described in the prophecies of Daniel: "I saw in the "night visions, and behold one like the Son of man "came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the "Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before "him. And there was given him dominion, and "glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and "languages should serve him: his dominion is an "everlasting dominion which shall not pass away,

* Rev. xi. 19. † Rev. xv. 8.

"and his kingdom that which shall not be destroy-
"ed."*—"And the kingdom, and dominion, and
"the greatness of the kingdom under the whole
"heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints
"of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting
"kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey
"him."†

This manifestation of the kingdom of God takes place, as the best interpreters are agreed, on the destruction of the fourth monarchy, or the Roman empire, in its last shape, as divided into ten kingdoms. The commencement of this manifestation seems to be predicted in a subsequent part of the Apocalypse, under the figure of the "marriage of "the Lamb."‡ It is further described where an account is given of the first resurrection,§ and of the new heaven and new earth, and the descent out of heaven of the New Jerusalem.‖ It is apparent, from the prophecies of Daniel, that this new state of things does not take place till the second coming of Christ with the clouds of heaven.¶ And the same thing may be gathered from the Apocalyptic description of the marriage of the Lamb, already referred to.

Nothing can be more strained or unnatural than the application usually made of this sublime vision to the times of the Roman Emperor Constantine: nor can any thing have a greater tendency to excite the scorn of unbelievers, than such an explication of so important a passage of this mystical book. However much it may have the sanction of great names,

* Dan. vii. 13, 14. † Ibid. ver. 27. ‡ Rev. xix. 7—9.
§ Rev. xx. 4—6. ‖ Rev. xxi. ¶ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

the chronological mark above referred to, would show the commonly received explanation to be erroneous, even were there no other reason for rejecting it.

In reference to the usual interpretation of this prophecy, Archdeacon Woodhouse, whom I have followed in rejecting it, makes the following remarks: "Having thus formed, upon the scriptural grounds "above stated, this notion of the application of this "prophecy, I found myself, when I came to read "the exposition of some eminent commentators, "little disposed to subscribe to their opinions, which "represent this seventh chapter of the Apocalypse, "as containing '*a description of the state of the "church in Constantine's time; of the peace and "protection it should enjoy under the civil powers, "and the great accession which should be made "unto it, both of Jews and Gentiles.*' Now the "history of this period faithfully related informs us, "that although the Christian Church was delivered "from persecution, and advanced in worldly con-"sideration and power, yet did it acquire no *real* "accession of worth, dignity, or exaltation, by its "connection with the imperial throne. Nay, from "that very time its degeneracy and corruption are "most indubitably to be dated. From that period, "worldly power and riches became the objects of its "leaders, not purity and virtue. Many entered the "Christian church, and obtained its honours and "dignities, by base dissimulation of their principles, "to please the emperor, and recommend themselves "to his favour; and the consequent extension of the "Christian religion among the heathen nations was,

"as Mosheim observes, *in name, not in reality.* "The worldly professors of Christianity in this cen-"tury were so far from fulfilling the prophecy, by "washing their robes in white, and by being *fed* "*and conducted by the Lamb,* that they appear "rather to have assumed the hue of *another leader,* "*the fire-coloured dragon,* and to have greedily "sought from him those worldly riches, and that "power, which their Lord had refused at his "hands."

Having, in the preceding pages, endeavoured to ascertain the import of the first six seals, I shall close what I have to offer upon them by a brief recapitulation, and some general remarks. If the exposition of these seals, which has been offered, be the true one, it appears that they contain a kind of epitome of the history of the church,* from the ascension of our Lord till the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;† and that the sixth seal offers also a brief description of the great revolution in the latter days, which is to precede the establishment of the kingdom of God.

It is remarked by Archdeacon Woodhouse, in his valuable work on the Apocalypse, that "this method "of divine prediction, presenting at first a general "sketch or outline, and afterwards a more complete "and finished colouring of events, is not peculiar "to this prophetical book."‡ We find the same method followed in the book of Daniel, wherein the prophetical history of the world is first given in its

* Archdeacon Woodhouse, p. 196. † Rev. xi.
‡ Archdeacon Woodhouse, p. 197

great outlines, under the vision of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and is detailed with increasing degrees of minuteness in the subsequent parts of the book. Now it has been justly remarked by Mede, that the Apocalypse is only an enlarged explication of that part of the book of Daniel which relates to the fourth kingdom. It is, therefore, consonant with analogy to suppose, that as the prophecies of Daniel open with a general epitome of what is afterwards more clearly revealed, the same thing should take place in the Apocalypse.

The history of the Christian church confirms also, in a remarkable manner, the explanation I have given of the first four seals; for if without a reference to any particular hypothesis concerning the meaning of prophecy, we turn to the page of history, we shall find that the church of Christ was first pure and triumphant; secondly, that it was filled with quarrels and discord; thirdly, that it was under the yoke of superstition and ignorance; fourthly, that it was converted into a vast slaughter-house by the dreadful persecutions of the papal power, and those secular powers connected with Rome. History therefore, comes in aid of our interpretation, and exhibits to us the same series and order of vicissitudes, as I have endeavoured to trace in the characters of the hieroglyphics of the first four seals. The exposition of the fifth and sixth seals offered in these pages seems to flow from that of the preceding ones; and that of the sixth seal is confirmed, as we have seen, by many analogous passages in other parts of the prophetical scriptures. When, also, we advert to the entire want of homogeneity which

is discoverable in the commonly received interpretation of these seals, all the arguments for the scheme that I have adopted derive new strength, and seem to shew, almost to demonstration, that it is the true one.

If, however, any reasons for confirming the foregoing interpretation, be still wanting, they will be supplied by placing in contrast with it, the theory of Mede and Bishop Newton. Let the reader advert to the deep and solemn importance, which is attached to the sealed book of the Apocalypse. It is first seen in the hand of God the Father. The voice of a mighty angel is next heard proclaiming, Who is worthy to open the book? And no one was found in heaven or in earth, worthy even to look thereon. At this disappointment, the beloved apostle weeps much, and when, at length, the Lamb approached and took the book out of the hand of him that liveth for ever and ever, all heaven is filled with a rapturous burst, of adoration and praise.*

Having contemplated these mighty preparations, if we next turn to the pages of the eminent (though in this instance inconsistent) writers above mentioned, we shall find, that four out of the seven seals, the opening of each of which is also marked by a ceremonial of the most significant nature, are supposed to relate to certain vicissitudes, of no great moment, in the secular affairs of the Roman empire during the three first centuries. I shall select a passage, from the Bishop's remarks on the third seal, as a fit specimen of the manner in which this divine prophecy is, by that exposition, debased and secularized,

* See Rev. v. 1—9.

and constrained to imbibe the sordid and grovelling spirit of earthly objects. After some observations respecting the capacity and price of the chænix of wheat, the Bishop proceeds. "But whatever be "the capacity of the chænix, which is difficult to "be determined, as it was different, in different "times and countries, yet such care and such re-"gulations, about the necessaries of life, imply "some want and scarcity of them. Scarcity obli-"geth men to exactness in the price and measure of "things. In short, the intent of the prophecy is, "that corn should be provided for the people, but it "should be distributed in exact measure and pro-"portion. This third period commenceth with "Septimius Severus, who was an emperor from "the south, being a native of Africa. He was "an enactor of just and equal laws, and was very "severe and implacable to offences. He would not "suffer even petty larcenies to go unpunished; as "neither would Alexander Severus, in the same "period, who was a most severe judge against "thieves, and was so fond of the Christian maxim, "Whatsoever you would not have done to you, do "not you to another, that he commanded it to be "engraved on the palace, and on the public buildings. "These two emperors, were also no less celebrated "for procuring of corn and oil and other provisions, "and for supplying the Romans with them, after "they had experienced the want of them."

Was it then, we may well say, (after reading the foregoing passage) for the purpose of discovering to the church, the state of the Roman markets for corn and oil, or the efficiency of its police in ap-

prehending thieves, that all these mighty preparations were made in heaven? Truly the exposition which includes in it such consequences would be ludicrous, were the subject itself of a less solemn and important nature. But the high nature of the theme, forbids our speaking, even of the errors of those who have treated it, excepting in the measured language of Christian gravity. I shall, therefore, close this chapter and the subject of these seals, by requesting the reader again to peruse and compare with what is here given from Bishop Newton, the simple but elevated exposition of the third seal, which I have adopted from Archdeacon Woodhouse, and I doubt not it will commend itself to his mind, with all the native force of beauty and of truth.*

* Some persons may perhaps here object, that I myself expound the seven trumpets as having a reference to the secular fortunes of the Roman empire, and that I am therefore inconsistent in opposing a similar application of the seals. The answer to this is, that I consider the *great mutations* only of the empire to be predicted in the trumpets, and not those minor changes which Mede and Bp. Newton suppose to be referred to in the seals. The Roman empire I consider to be the subject of prophecy only on account of its connection with the church, and because while it exists (as it still does) it is the great enemy of the church, and when it is destroyed it is to make way for the glorious reign of the Messiah.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SEVENTH SEAL.

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven about the space of "half an hour; and I saw the seven angels which "stood before God, and to them were given seven "trumpets."*

In the general view which I have taken of the contents of the first six seals, I have followed Archdeacon Woodhouse; but I am now about to take leave of my respectable guide, being obliged to differ from him with regard to most of the remaining parts of the Apocalypse. I however coincide with the learned writer, in the interpretation which he offers of the silence in heaven, at the opening of the seventh seal. He explains it as being indicative of the introduction of a new subject, and a new series of prophecies; it seems, as he remarks, to be exhi-"bited for the purpose of denoting a change in the "mode or in the subject of the prophecy; to dis-"unite the succeeding scene from that which had "gone before; to unfold a new chain of pre-"diction."†

During this awful and portentous silence, a new scene presents itself to the eyes of the apostle. He sees seven angels, to whom were given seven trumpets. As this is the first object exhibited under the seventh seal, we may infer from it that this seal relates principally to the sounding of these trumpets,

* Rev. viii. 1, 2. † Archdeacon Woodhouse, p. 200.

and comprehends within itself the whole of the events signified by the trumpets; and in this inference I have the support of some of the most distinguished writers on the Apocalypse.* Now, seeing that the first six seals contain an epitome of the state of the church, down to that final consummation of all things on this earth, when "the saints of the Most "High shall take the kingdom and possess the king-"dom for ever;"† and that the trumpets cannot extend beyond this final consummation, it follows that the seventh seal, and seven trumpets, must relate to events which are contemporaneous with the first six seals, or at least with the last part of them. And in considering these trumpets we shall discover reasons for the conclusion, that as the seals give us an epitome of the history of the church, so the trumpets contain an account of the great political and ecclesiastical revolutions which shall successively affect the Roman empire, or fourth kingdom of Daniel, until it is destroyed to make way for the kingdom of the Son of Man.‡

* Vide Bishop Newton *in loco*, also Mede on the Apocalypse.

† Dan. vii. 18.

‡ Ib. vii. 11—13. The learned Vitringa makes some introductory observations on the trumpets, which are well worthy of our attention. I shall in this note give the substance of them in an abridged form, as my limits will not permit me to insert the whole passage.

He supposes that, in the trumpets, there is an allusion to the manner in which the city of Jericho was delivered into the hands of the children of Israel. They had the promise of the land of Canaan for their inheritance. But that proud and strong city opposed itself to their entrance into the promised land. The priests were therefore commanded by the Lord, to compass the city with seven ram's horns, and the ark of the Lord, once every day for six successive days: but on the seventh day they were to march round it seven times, and at the end of the seventh time the people were commanded to shout

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, "having a golden censer; and there was given unto "him much incense, that he should offer it, with "the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar "which was before the throne. And the smoke of "the incense ascended, with the prayers of the "saints, from the hand of the angel before God. "And the angel took the censer and filled it with "the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth; "and there were voices, and thunderings, and "lightnings, and an earthquake."*

Incense is a symbol of the prayers of true Christians. Thus in Malachi it is predicted, in reference to the times of the gospel: "From the rising of "the sun unto the going down of the same, my "Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in "every place incense shall be offered unto my "Name, and a pure offering: for my Name shall be "great among the heathen, saith the Lord of "Hosts."† And in the Apocalypse we are expressly told, that the vials full of incense, held by the twenty-four elders, are the prayers of saints.‡

aloud, at which instant the walls fell flat down, the city was taken, and all within it put to the sword, Josh. vi.—In a similar manner, says Vitringa, the inheritance of the world is promised to the church, (Dan. vii. 18. 22. 27.) but the city and empire of Rome oppose themselves to the reign and kingdom of Christ, and between them there is to be an obstinate contest carried on through many ages. But that city and empire, founded in blood, idolatry, and superstition, are destined to be destroyed by various steps, and with peculiar demonstrations of divine justice and severity, after the example of Jericho. This (says Vitringa) is declared in the trumpets.—And the seven vials are to be referred to the seventh trumpet, and answer to the seventh day of the encompassing of Jericho, when the priests went round it with the trumpets seven times.

* Rev. viii. 3—5. † Mal. i. 11. ‡ Rev. v. 8.

In the passage we are now considering, the incense which is offered by the angel, with the prayers of all saints, seems to signify, that their prayers are such as to find acceptance with God, and that they are to receive an answer. The answer to them appears to be contained in the action performed by the angel in the following verse. Filling the censer with fire from the altar, he casts it upon the earth, and there follow "voices, and thunderings, and "lightnings, and an earthquake." Fire is a symbol of various significations. When it descends upon the servants of God it denotes the purifying and life-giving influence of the Holy Ghost. Thus John the Baptist assured the Jews, that there came one after him who should baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* On the other hand, when fire comes down on the enemies of God, it is a symbol of his destroying wrath. "Whose fan is in his "hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and "will gather the wheat into his garner; but the "chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable."†

It seems to be in the last of these senses that the symbol of fire is used in the passage now under consideration, as we may infer from the context, and also the effects which follow. The fire is cast upon the earth, which is, throughout this mystical book, used to denote the world, as opposed to the cause and kingdom of Christ; and since the fourth kingdom of Daniel, or the Roman empire, is in an especial manner the scene of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, we may conclude, that the fire which is cast upon the earth by the angel in this place,

* Luke iii. 17. Comp. Is. vi. 6, 7. † Luke 17.

signifies the wrath of God coming down upon the Roman empire, in answer to the prayers which had been offered in the preceding verse. The effects of the descent of this fire are voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. We have already seen, in considering the sixth seal, that an earthquake, in the language of symbols, denotes a revolution. Voices, thunderings, and lightnings, in the natural world, happen, as we know, in the atmosphere, or region of the air. When these words are used symbolically, they must therefore signify such convulsions as affect the political atmosphere, or region of the government, and the civil and religious constitution of the empire, which is the subject of the prophecy. We thus arrive at the conclusion, that the voices, thunderings, and lightnings, and the earthquake, mentioned in this passage, denote a political convulsion in the government of the Roman empire, attended with a revolution.

These events occur before the sounding of any of the seven trumpets. But it is generally admitted by our ablest interpreters, that the first four of these trumpets refer to the overthrow of the western empire by the Goths and Vandals; and I shall afterwards give my reasons for concurring in this commonly received interpretation. The political convulsion and revolution now under consideration must, therefore, have occurred previously to the fall of the western empire. Now history informs us of only one such event, which happened in the Roman empire between the period when the Apocalypse was published, and the fall of the western empire;

and that was the revolution in the time of Constantine, when paganism ceased to be the established religion of the empire, and Christianity was embraced by the imperial family. This revolution was so important in its consequences, that the great body of interpreters have, as we have seen, applied to it the dreadful convulsions of the sixth seal. In this application they appear to have erred, but yet the revolution under Constantine was of sufficient magnitude to render it probable that some mention should be made of it in the Apocalypse, and it seems to find its place in the passage we are now considering.

In this passage we behold the prayers of all saints ascending up with acceptance before God; by which prayers may be signified the cries of the servants of God under the cruel and long-continued persecutions of the heathen Roman empire. An answer to these prayers is sent. Fire, an emblem of the wrath of God, is cast upon that empire; and there follow political convulsions, voices, thunderings, and lightnings, and a revolution or earthquake, whereby paganism is cast down to the ground, and Christianity occupies its place as the religion of the government. The heathen persecutions are thus brought to a period.

The above interpretation is entirely new, as I have not met with it in any writer whom I have consulted on the Apocalypse: I shall therefore offer another argument, which seems to me to strengthen it. The principle of homogeneity requires us to understand the symbol of an earthquake in the same sense, wherever it occurs in the prophecies of this

book; and in considering the sixth seal, we have seen that it signifies a revolution: indeed, it is generally admitted to bear that meaning. It must therefore be interpreted in the same manner here. But since the publication of the Apocalypse, only three revolutions have happened in the Roman empire.* The first was in the time of Constantine; the second at the period of the reformation; and the third is that awful revolution, which began by the overthrow of the French monarchy, and has since then never ceased to convulse the world. The earthquake mentioned in the eighth chapter of the Apocalypse cannot, for chronological reasons, be referred to the second or third of these revolutions. It must therefore relate to the first.

* A revolution may be defined as a change in the state of an empire, arising from internal convulsions. The overthrow of the western empire by the barbarous nations, and of the eastern by the Turks, were not *revolutions*; they were *conquests*.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS.

"And the seven angels which had the seven "trumpets, prepared themselves to sound. The "first angel sounded, and there followed hail and "fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon "the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt "up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the "second angel sounded, and as it were, a great "mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; "and the third part of the sea became blood; and "the third part of the creatures which were in the "sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the "ships were destroyed. And the third angel "sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, "burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the "third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of "waters: and the name of the star is called Worm-"wood: and the third part of the waters became "wormwood; and many men died of the waters "because they were made bitter. And the fourth "angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was "smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the "third part of the stars; so as the third part of "them was darkened, and the day shone not for "a third part of it, and the night likewise."*

That which takes place under the first four trumpets is the partial destruction of an universe, consisting of dry land, a sea, rivers and fountains, and

* Rev. viii. 6—13.

celestial luminaries. All interpreters of note agree that this universe is to be considered as a symbolical one; but there is much difference of opinion with regard to the signification of the symbols. The learned Archdeacon Woodhouse applies these trumpets wholly to spiritual objects, and supposes that they relate to the general warfare which the Christian religion underwent on its first establishment.* To this interpretation it may, however, be objected (and the objection seems conclusive), that if the first four trumpets relate to the fortunes of the church, then the sun, a third part of which is smitten under the fourth trumpet, must be a symbol denoting our Lord, the Sun of Righteousness; for there is no other sun in the firmament of the church. But the incongruity and absurdity of supposing that any of these trumpets can affect Him, who, though He was once dead, is now alive for evermore, and hath the keys of Death and Hades, is so manifest, that it at once appears, that an interpretation which involves such a consequence cannot be the true one. Some other interpreters apply these trumpets partly to the fortunes of the Roman empire, and partly to those of the church. In particular, they understand the third trumpet as denoting the corruption of the waters of life, or the pure doctrines of the gospel, by the early heretics and the bishop of Rome. But wherever *water*, in the prophetical writings, is applied to signify the doctrines of the gospel, or the consolations of the Holy Spirit, it is either denominated *the water of life*, to distinguish it from material water, or there is something in the context

* Archdeacon Woodhouse on the Apocalypse, p. 218.

clearly marking that it is to be so understood. Our Lord said to the Jews, "If any man thirst, let him "come unto me and drink. He that believeth on "me (as the scripture hath said), out of his belly "shall flow rivers of *living water*."* And when he conversed with the woman of Samaria respecting the water of life, though he did not use the expression *living water*, he distinctly showed that this was the nature of the water which he should give, by saying that it would be in the recipient "a well "of water springing up into everlasting life."† The waters seen by the prophet Ezekiel, in his vision,‡ are also sufficiently marked, by their healing quality, to be the waters of life; and the river, clear as crystal, which the apostle John saw proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb,§ is expressly called a pure river *of water of life*, to distinguish it from all other water.

In the account of the third trumpet, there is no expression which can lead us to suppose, that the waters which are made bitter by the falling of the blazing star, are the waters of life. Moreover, we are obliged, by the principle of homogeneity, to interpret these four trumpets as relating to objects of a like nature: we must therefore reject every interpretation which refers a part of them to the church, and a part to secular objects; and that some of them refer to the secular Roman empire, has been admitted by all the writers whom I have met with, excepting Archdeacon Woodhouse; and for rejecting the interpretation of this learned writer I have already offered a sufficient reason.

* John vii. 38. † John iii. 14. ‡ Ezek. xlvii. § Rev. xxii.

These arguments are, I think, conclusive in showing, that none of the symbols of the trumpets which we are now considering, can relate to the church. They must consequently be applied exclusively to secular objects, and having in our view the principle already more than once noticed, that the Roman empire is the principal scene of the Apocalyptic prophecies, we shall find no difficulty in referring this part of the Apocalypse to events which took place within the limits of that empire, and have relation to its fortunes.

The first four trumpets have accordingly, by the great body of interpreters, been supposed to relate to the overthrow of the western empire by the Goths, Vandals, and other barbarous nations. As I entirely concur with the able writers who have adopted this explanation, I shall first give a brief history of the events which seem to me to have fulfilled the prophecy of these trumpets; and afterwards it is my intention to offer some general remarks in support of my interpretation.

In the year 376, the Visigoths, driven from their possessions in the countries situated to the north of the Danube by an invasion of the Huns, were, at their own earnest solicitations, transported across the Danube, and admitted into the Roman empire by the emperor Valens. Scarcely, however, had they been received, when they rose in rebellion against the Roman government, defeated the general of the emperor, and ravaged the country to the south of the Danube. Uniting their forces with those of the Ostrogoths and other tribes of barbarians, whom

they invited to cross the Danube, they, in two years after their first entrance into the empire, defeated and slew the emperor Valens at the battle of Adrianople, in which above two-thirds of the Roman army were destroyed, and they afterwards desolated the provinces as far as the confines of Italy.*

After this fatal battle, the Goths never quitted the Roman empire. They were, indeed, for a time, reduced into a state of apparent subjection by Theodosius the Great. But the period of tranquillity was of short duration, and ended with his life.

I conceive, therefore, that the first trumpet sounded at the time of the Gothic eruption in the reign of Valens, A. D. 376. Its sounding was followed by hail and fire mingled with blood. Hail, in the prophetical style, is a symbol denoting war, and the ravages of hostile armies. The fire and blood accompanying the hail of this trumpet, denote the dreadful and destructive nature of the wars which should ensue. The effects of the descent of this hail upon the trees and the grass are agreeable to the analogy of the symbol, and denote the ruin which was brought by the Gothic irruption on the inhabitants of the empire.

The second period of the Gothic invasions commenced in the year 395, on the death of the great Theodosius. "He died in the month of January; "and before the end of the winter of the same year "the Gothic nation was in arms." †—"The bar-"riers of the Danube were thrown open; the savage "warriors of Scythia issued from their forests; and "the uncommon severity of the winter allowed the

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. xxvi. † Ibid. chap. xxx.

"poet to remark, that they rolled their ponderous "waggons over the broad and icy bank of the in-"dignant river." *

In the year 396, Alaric, the leader, and subsequently the king of the Visigoths, marched into and ravaged Greece. The fertile fields of Phocis and Bæotia were covered by a deluge of "barba-"rians, who massacred the males of an age to "bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females, "with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages." —"The whole territory of Attica, from the pro-"montory of Sunium to the town of Megara, was "blasted with the baneful presence of the bar-"barians; and, if we may use the comparison of a "contemporary philosopher, Athens itself resembled "the bleeding and empty skin of a slaughtered "victim."—"Corinth, Argos, Sparta, yielded with-"out resistance to the arms of the Goths; and the "most fortunate of the inhabitants were saved by "death from beholding the slavery of their families, "and the conflagration of their cities." †

Italy was invaded by Alaric in the year 400, and in the year 406 by a mixed army of Vandals, Suevi, and Burgundians, under the command of Radagaisus; and though both these armies of invaders were defeated by Stilicho, the master-general of the west, Italy and the capital of the empire had but a short respite. In 408, Alaric entered Italy a second time, and besieged Rome, which was reduced to the last extremity by the ravages of famine and plague. The imperial city was at this time spared by the barbarian conqueror for the payment

* Gibbon, chap. xxx. † Ibid.

of a large ransom. It was besieged a second time in the following year, and in the year 410, the Goths, a third time, appeared before the gates of Rome, which they took and sacked. After enriching his army with the plunder of the capital of the empire, Alaric marched into the southern provinces of Italy, which remained in possession of the Goths till the year 414, when a treaty was concluded with Adolphus, the successor of Alaric, in consequence of which he evacuated Italy, and marched into Gaul.*

In the year 406, the province of Gaul was invaded by the remains of the great army of Radagaisus.† After defeating the Franks, who opposed their progress, "the victorious confederates pur-
"sued their march; and on the last day of the year,
"in a season of the year when the waters of the
"Rhine were most probably frozen, they entered
"without opposition the defenceless provinces of
"Gaul. This memorable passage of the Suevi, the
"Vandals, the Alani, and the Burgundians, who never
"afterwards retreated, may be considered as the fall
"of the Roman empire in the countries beyond
"the Alps; and the barriers which had so long se-
"parated the savage and the civilized nations of the
"earth, were from that fatal moment levelled
"with the ground."—"The banks of the Rhine
"were crowned, like those of the Tiber, with
"elegant houses and well-cultivated farms. This
"scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed
"into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking
"ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature
"from the desolation of man."‡

* Gibbon, chap. xxxi. † Ibid. chap. xxx. ‡ Ibid.

Having spread the dreadful ravages of war throughout the greatest part of the provinces of Gaul, the same horde of barbarians entered Spain in the year 409. "The irruption of these nations "was followed by the most dreadful calamities." —"The progress of famine reduced the miserable "inhabitants to feed on the flesh of their fellow-"creatures; and even the wild beasts, which mul-"tiplied without controul in the desert, were exas-"perated, by the taste of blood, and the impatience "of hunger, boldly to attack and devour their human "prey. Pestilence soon appeared, the inseparable "companion of famine: a large proportion of the "people was swept away; and the groans of the "dying excited only the envy of their surviving "friends. At length the barbarians, satiated with "carnage and rapine, and afflicted by the contagious "evils which they themselves had introduced, fixed "their permanent seats in the depopulated country."*

In the year 429, the Vandals under the command of Genseric, passed from Spain into Africa, and established themselves in that province: and the Roman empire in that quarter was entirely subverted by them about eleven years afterwards, when they obtained possession of the city of Carthage.

The second period of the Gothic irruptions, which began in A. D. 395, seems to me to have been the fulfilment of the second trumpet, on the sounding of which "a great mountain, burning with fire, was "cast into the sea."

A mountain, in the prophetical style, signifies a kingdom. It is well known that the irruption of

* Gibbon, chap. xxxi.

the northern nations into the Roman empire was of this peculiar nature, that not bodies of armed men only, but whole nations of invaders, transported themselves, with their women and children, their goods and effects, into the territories of the empire. Such an invasion, by various tribes of fierce and impetuous barbarians, who carried fire and sword wherever they marched, seems to be fitly symbolized by a vast mountain, burning with fire, being cast into the sea.

The third period of the irruptions of the northern nations into the Roman empire, appears to have commenced in the year 441, when the Huns under Attila, invaded the eastern empire. "The whole "breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hun-"dred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was "at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by "the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the "field."—"The armies of the eastern empire were "vanquished in three successive engagements; and "the progress of Attila may be traced by the fields "of battle. The two former, on the banks of the "Utus, and under the walls of Marcianopolis, were "fought in the extensive plains between the Danube "and Mount Hæmus. As the Romans were pressed "by a victorious enemy, they gradually and unskil-"fully retired toward the Chersonesus of Thrace; "and that narrow peninsula, the last extremity of "the land, was marked by their third and irreparable "defeat. By the destruction of this army, Attila "acquired the indisputable possession of the field. "From the Hellespont to Thermopylæ, and the "suburbs of Constantinople, he ravaged without

"resistance and without mercy the provinces of "Thrace and Macedonia. Heraclea and Hadrianople "might perhaps escape this dreadful irruption of the "Huns; but the words the most expressive of total "extirpation and erasure, are applied to the ca-"lamities which they inflicted on seventy cities of "the eastern empire."*

In the year 450, Attila invaded Gaul, and ravaged it with fire and sword; but in the following year he was defeated with prodigious slaughter at the battle of Chalons. In the year 452, he entered Italy, and besieged Aquileia, which he took, and destroyed so completely, that the succeeding generation could scarcely discover its ruins. The cities of Altinum, Concordia, and Padua, were also reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. Alarmed for the safety of Rome, the emperor and senate sent a solemn embassy to deprecate the wrath of the conqueror: a peace was in consequence concluded, and Attila evacuated Italy, and died in the following year.

The successive invasions of the empire by Attila were probably the accomplishment of the third trumpet, on the sounding of which "a great star "fell from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and "fell upon the third part of the rivers and the foun-"tains of waters." The star seen by the apostle in this trumpet appears to have been *a comet*, which is a fit emblem of a mighty conqueror. Indeed, in the symbolical language, a star, when applied to temporal things, always means a king or a prince: this star, burning like a lamp, therefore denotes

* Gibbon, chap. xxxiv.

a prince armed with the fire of war. The wormwood into which the waters were converted by this star, seems emblematical of the bitter and dreadful sufferings inflicted on the empire by Attila and his Huns.

On the sounding of the fourth trumpet, the third part of the celestial luminaries were smitten and obscured. This, in the language of symbols, evidently refers to the extinction of the imperial government of Rome within the limits of the western empire, which was effected between the years 455 and 476. In the first of these years, Rome was taken and sacked by Genseric, king of the Vandals, who carried away with him immense spoil, and an innumerable multitude of captives; among whom were the Empress Eudoxia and her two daughters. Rome never recovered this stroke. In the year 476, the imperial government was subverted, and Augustulus, the last emperor of the west, was deposed and banished from Rome by Odoacer, the general of the Heruli, who was elected, and reigned, the first barbarian king of Italy.

Having thus given a hasty sketch of the series of events to which the symbols of the first four trumpets seem to be applicable, I shall now offer some remarks in confirmation of the foregoing interpretation. It is important, in considering these trumpets, not to lose sight of the *oneness* of the complex symbols which are therein presented to our attention. To say that these trumpets are all homogeneous, is not enough: they are more than homogeneous, they in fact all belong to one undivided subject; and that is, as I observed before, *a symbolical universe*, and

we may hence deduce a new argument to show the impropriety of those interpretations which refer some of the symbols to spiritual and others to secular objects. This symbolical universe is viewed as consisting of two great divisions, the terrestrial and celestial. The first of these must be considered as representing the territories and population of the empire, and the second its government or ruling powers.

It also appears that the terrestrial symbolical world is considered as consisting of three distinct parts, the dry land, the sea, and the rivers and fountains; but it does not follow, that each of these portions of the symbolical earth is applicable to distinct and specific parts of the Roman empire.* The above division of the symbolical earth seems rather to be made for the purpose of exhibiting to us the universality of the desolation of the empire, which is represented by the symbols. To enlarge a little upon this idea, it may be observed that the natural globe which we inhabit is actually divisible into the above three parts of dry land, sea, and rivers, and

* This remark, and the one made at the beginning of the following paragraph, receives a very remarkable confirmation from the following passage of Vitringa's commentary:—"Ego vero lubens concedo, "imagines symbolicas variis casibus non esse nimis quæsite et anxie "ab interprete tractandas, sed sæpe in complexu, non singulatim esse "exponendas; nec abnuo in ipsa hac imagine symbolica id forte alibi "usu venire: aliis tamen locis et in hac prophetia ubi partes em- "blematis fusius et explicatius recensentur et subjectum ad quod "emblema referendum est partium emblematis præcipuarum inter- "pretationem particularem admittit, eadem negligenda non videtur "cum aliunde constet partes emblematis ut sunt sol, luna, stellæ, "insulæ, montes, arbores, singulas per se mystice et alligorice res "alias significare posse, et ad eas figurandas adhiberi."—Vitringa Anak. Apocalyp. p. 283.

lakes. When therefore the natural world is used as a symbol to denote any particular empire, the destruction of that empire, in all its parts, must be shown by the destruction of the symbol which represents it in all its parts. Thus if only the dry land of the symbolical world were destroyed, it would imply that only a part of the empire was to be affected. But as in these trumpets, the dry land, sea and fountains, are all affected, it denotes universality in the desolation of the empire.

In making the above remarks, it is not my intention to maintain that there are no cases in which the symbolical dry land, and sea, and rivers and fountains, have specific and definite significations. In considering the prophecy of the seven last vials of wrath, which refer to the final destruction of the Roman empire, I shall endeavour to show that these symbols are, in the accomplishment of the vials, each referrible to particular objects. But it is observable, that the Roman empire, at the period of the pouring out of the vials, is divided into a number of independent kingdoms and states, which considerably facilitates such a reference. In the mean while I shall only remark, that the earth or dry land is in general a symbol denoting the territorial dominions of the empire which is the subject of the prophecy;* and that the sea, and rivers and fountains, which together form the collective body of waters, signify, in the language of symbols, the united population of the empire, or the "peoples, and multitudes, and "nations, and tongues," who inhabit it.†

* Faber's Dissertation on the 1260 years, vol. i. chap. 2.
† Rev. xvii. 15.

There is a circumstance with respect to the trumpets we are now considering, which seems to have perplexed all our interpreters. It is, that on the sounding of each trumpet, only a third part of the object against which it denounces vengeance is destroyed. I have not, in any author whose writings I have met with, seen any sufficient reason for this singular fact. Bishop Newton supposes that there is in it a reference to the Roman empire, as being at that time a third part of the known world, and the Bishop is followed by Mr. Faber in this idea.* But it may be remarked, that the symbolical universe seen by the Apostle John, represented not the whole habitable world, but the Roman empire in particular, which is the special subject and theatre of the Apocalyptic prophecies; and in the interpretation of the vials, Mr. Faber himself admits this to be the case. "The earth," says Mr. Faber, in his remarks on the first vial, "is the Roman empire."†

If, then, the entire symbolical earth denote the

* In his fifth edition, Mr. Faber has adopted a new exposition of the third part. He divides the Roman empire and symbolical universe into three parts, the western, the eastern, and the provinces of Africa, and he supposes the destruction of one of these thirds to denote the overthrow of the western empire. But this is inconsistent with his own explanation of the vials; for in their effusion, the whole earth, sea, and rivers and fountains, and not a third part of them, are the objects of vengeance; and yet Mr. Faber limits the effects of those vials to the Latin, or western empire. Neither is it true, as Mr. Faber affirms, that the western empire alone was subverted under the four first trumpets: the provinces of Africa were included in the same calamity, and wrested from the Roman empire by the Vandalic arms. Mr. Faber's new explanation does not, therefore, afford a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. See his Dissertation on the 1260 years, vol. ii. p. 8, 9.

† Dissertation on the 1260 years, vol. ii. p. 8. 4th Ed.

Roman empire, to suppose that the frequent mention of a third part of this Roman earth, has any relation to the proportion which the Roman empire itself bears to the whole habitable world, would be to introduce the greatest confusion of ideas into the exposition of the prophecy. Mr. Bicheno thinks that the third part, so often mentioned in this prophecy, has an allusion to the division of the empire into three distinct governments or prefectures, and he quotes Dr. Cressener in support of this explanation of the difficulty. But were this idea well founded, it would be incumbent on Mr. Bicheno to show that each of the trumpets affected only one particular prefecture; and as this cannot be done, I must reject the mode of solving the difficulty which he proposes.

The following observations upon the point now under consideration have occurred to me, and I leave it to the reader to judge how far they serve to remove the difficulty. I shall introduce them by a quotation from Mede's works: "I conceive," says that learned writer, "Daniel to be *Apocalypsis contracta* (the Apocalypse compressed), and the Apocalypse, Daniel explicated, in that where both treat about the same subject; namely, what was revealed to Daniel concerning the fourth kingdom, but *summatim* and in gross, is showed to St. John *particulatim*, with the distinction and order of the several facts and circumstances which were to betide and accompany the same." * By consulting the book of Daniel, we learn that the fourth beast, or Roman kingdom, was to exist in two different

* Works, Book iv. ep. 32.

states: first, as an undivided empire; and, secondly, as divided into ten kingdoms, symbolized by ten horns.* This change in the condition of that empire took place, as is well known, at the time of the overthrow of the western empire by the Goths and Vandals. After this overthrow the empire was divided among the conquerors, and was formed into ten kingdoms; but the empire itself, though its form was varied, did not cease to exist. The imperial title and power still continued in the eastern empire, and the title at least was revived in the western empire by Charlemagne; and has continued from his time till the present age in an uninterrupted line of princes. From Daniel we further learn that the final destruction of the empire is not to take place till the sitting of the judgment which immediately precedes, or is synchronical with, the second advent of the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven;† and, in strict harmony with Daniel, the Apocalyptic prophecies discover to us that the destruction of the same empire is to be effected by the pouring out of the seven vials of wrath, after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and immediately before the establishment of the kingdom of Christ.

Now the first four trumpets relate, not to the final destruction of the empire, but to the overthrow of the western empire, preparatory to its partition among the ten kings. After the sounding of these trumpets, therefore, the empire was still to exist, though in a different shape; and hence we discover a reason of their effects being limited to a part of each object against which they were directed.

* Dan. vii. 23, 24. † Ibid. v. 10—14.

There is not that looseness or uncertainty in the language of symbols which many persons suppose. It is capable of an interpretation almost as strict as the language of sounds, or of letters, the representatives of sounds; though it must be confessed, that from our more partial knowledge of the symbolical language, the discovery of the true interpretation is often very difficult to us, as is that of the sense of a foreign dialect with which we have an imperfect acquaintance.

If the first four trumpets had brought ruin upon the whole of the symbolical universe seen by the apostle, it would have denoted the entire and final destruction of the empire represented by the symbolical world: but as these trumpets were designed to represent only the *subversion* of the Roman empire of the west, and not its entire *destruction*, it was necessary that their operation should have certain limits assigned to it.

In confirmation of the above observation, we may remark, that when the seven vials of wrath are poured out, which are to bring final destruction on the empire, there is no limitation of the effects of the vials. Under the first trumpet, hail mingled with fire is cast on the earth, and only a *third part* of the earth is burnt up. But under the first vial, which is also poured out on the earth, the effects reach to *the men*; i. e. *the men generally*, which had the mark of the beast, &c. Under the second trumpet only a *third* part of the sea becomes blood, and only a *third* part of the creatures in the sea die; but the second vial converts the *whole* sea into blood, like that of a dead man, and *every living soul* dies.

The third trumpet affects only *a third* part of the rivers and fountains; but the third vial turns *the whole* rivers and fountains into blood. The first four trumpets are thus universal in their extent, but limited in their operation; and therefore they imply the *subversion*, and not the *destruction* or *eradication* of the object. The vials are both universal in their extent, and unlimited in their operation; and thus they signify the utter and final destruction of the objects against which they are directed.

The above remarks furnish, I think, a satisfactory reason for the limitation assigned to the effects of the first four trumpets. But if it be asked, why the proportion of one-third, and neither more nor less, of the symbolical universe, is the limit which has been fixed to these effects? I confess I can only answer the question, by saying that it has seemed good to the Spirit of God to select that proportion, and if any other integral part had been used for the same purpose, it is quite evident that a similar question might have been put.

I shall conclude the subject of the first four trumpets, with some remarks upon the symbols which are presented to our view under them. All the imagery of the Apocalypse is Jewish. Our Lord himself appeared to John, clothed in the pontifical robe of the high priest, and in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, having an evident reference to the seven-branched candlestick in the tabernacle, which it was the daily office of the priests in the tabernacle to trim, and put in order. We afterwards read of a sea of glass before the throne, in allusion to the brazen sea in the temple, and of the golden altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offerings, and

the ark of the covenant. We also read of the Lamb on Mount Sion.

The general imagery of the book being thus proved to be Jewish, it is probable that the symbolical universe seen by John had likewise a Jewish aspect. This serves to illustrate the justness of the proportions observed by the Holy Spirit in the different symbols. Thus, if the sea seen by the apostle in the second trumpet was borrowed from Jewish ideas, it must have been either an inland sea, like the Sea or Lake of Genesareth, or at least like the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean. A Jew could have no idea of such a sea as the Atlantic or Pacific. Hence we perceive, that there is nothing extravagant in the imagery of the second trumpet: for it is at least within the limits of poetical probability, that a vast mountain, burning with fire, being cast into the Sea of Genesareth, or the extremity of the Mediterranean, should turn the third part of it into blood. The propriety of the adaptation of the different symbols to each other in these trumpets, is also worthy of our most attentive observation. The general idea presented by them, is that of the desolation of the symbolical earth, sea, and rivers, by foreign bodies precipitated upon them, which are used as symbols of hosts of barbarian conquerors. Now what could have been selected as a fitter agent of desolation to the symbolical earth than hail mingled with fire? What a more proper emblem of the destruction of an inland sea, than a burning volcano torn from its basis and cast into the sea? There is also a beautiful proportion between the smaller apparent magnitude of the blazing comet, and the rivers and fountains upon which it fell.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET, OR THE FIRST WOE.

"And I beheld and heard an angel, flying through "the midst of the heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, "by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of "the three angels which are yet to sound." *

This solemn denunciation seems to be introduced for the purpose of drawing our attention to the great importance of the events which were to happen under the last three trumpets. It serves also as a chronological mark to show that these three trumpets are all posterior to the first four, not only in order, but in time; and that they belong to a new series of events. This denunciation is, as it were, the introduction or preface to the three woe trumpets.

It is immediately followed by the sounding of the fifth angel. The apostle then sees "a star which "had fallen from heaven to the earth, and to him "was given the key of the pit of the abyss; and he "opened the pit of the abyss, and there arose a "smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great "furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by "reason of the smoke of the pit." †

I shall premise what I have to offer on the subject of this trumpet, by saying that I entirely concur with the great body of commentators, in thinking that the locusts who appear in it are the Saracens under the false prophet Mahummud: and I shall

* Rev. viii. 13. † Ib. ix. 1, 2.

afterwards give my reasons for holding this opinion. But in interpreting the symbols which are introductory to the appearance of the locusts, I feel myself obliged to dissent from many respectable writers.

The symbols of this vision evidently belong to things spiritual. The star is therefore a Christian pastor or bishop.* His falling from the heaven to the earth signifies his fall from primitive purity and simplicity into apostacy. This star or apostate bishop is the great agent in opening the pit of the abyss, or pit of hell, out of which a black smoke arises, which I conceive to be a symbol of the false doctrines and gross ignorance which overspread the Christian church during the fifth and sixth centuries. These false doctrines consisted chiefly in the adoration of saints, relics, and images, and in rigorous monastic austerities, the merit and efficacy of which were highly extolled by the ignorant and superstitious clergy, the blind leaders of the blind. The following account of the state of the church during the sixth century, taken from Mosheim, seems sufficiently illustrative of the nature of that symbolical smoke which issued from the pit of the abyss. "The public teachers and instructors of the people "degenerated sadly from the apostolic character. "They seemed to aim at nothing else than to sink "the multitude into the most opprobrious ignorance "and superstition; to efface in their minds all sense "of the beauty and excellence of genuine piety; "and to substitute, in the place of religious princi-

* Rev. i. 20. The seven stars are the angels (bishops) of the seven churches.

"ples, a blind veneration for the clergy, and a stupid "zeal for a senseless round of ridiculous rites and "ceremonies. This perhaps will appear less sur-"prising when we consider, that the blind led the "blind; for the public ministers and teachers of "religion were for the most part grossly ignorant: "nay, almost as much so as the multitude whom they "were appointed to instruct.

"To be convinced of the truth of the dismal re-"presentation we have here given of the state of "religion at this time, nothing more is necessary "than to cast an eye upon the doctrines now taught "*concerning the worship of images and saints, the* "*fire of purgatory, the efficacy of good works (i. e.* "the observance of human rites and institutions) "*towards the attainment of salvation, the power* "*of relics to heal the diseases of the body and mind,* "and such like sordid and miserable fancies which "are inculcated in many of the superstitious pro-"ductions of this century, and particularly in the "Epistles and other writings of Gregory the Great. "Nothing more ridiculous, on the one hand, than "the solemnity and liberality with which this good "but silly pontiff distributed the wonder-working "relics; and nothing more lamentable, on the "other, than the stupid eagerness and devotion with "which the deluded multitude received them, and "suffered themselves to be persuaded that a portion "of stinking oil, taken from the lamps which burned "at the tombs of the martyrs, had a supernatural "efficacy to sanctify its possessors, and to defend "them from all dangers both of a temporal and "spiritual nature." *

* Mosheim, Cent. VI. part ii.

The testimony of the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire, may by many readers be deemed no less important and unexceptionable than that of Mosheim. Mr. Gibbon concludes the account of the introduction and progress of the worship of saints and relics in the Christian church, in the following words: "The sublime and simple "theology of the primitive Christians was gradually "corrupted; and the monarchy of heaven, already "clouded by metaphysical subtleties, was degraded "by the introduction of a popular mythology which "tended to restore the reign of polytheism."

"If," continues the same writer, "in the begin-"ning of the fifth century, Tertullian or Lactantius "had been suddenly raised from the dead, to assist "at the festival of some popular saint or martyr, "they would have gazed with astonishment and in-"dignation on the profane spectacle, which had "succeeded to the pure and spiritual worship of a "Christian congregation."—"The Christians fre-"quented the tombs of the martyrs, in the hope of "obtaining from their powerful intercession every "sort of spiritual, but more especially of temporal "blessings. They implored the preservation of "their health, or the cure of their infirmities; the "fruitfulness of their barren wives, or the safety "and happiness of their children. Whenever they "undertook any distant or dangerous journey, they "requested that the holy martyrs would be their "guides and protectors on the road; and if they "returned without having experienced any mis-"fortune, they again hastened to the tombs of the "martyrs to celebrate with grateful thanksgivings

"their obligations to the memory and relics of those "heavenly patrons." *

It will scarcely be disputed by those who have given a close attention to the analogies of the language of symbols, that the universal prevalence of the false doctrines, which are described in the foregoing extracts, might be fitly symbolized by a black smoke rising out of the pit of the abyss, or the infernal regions. By this smoke the sun and air were darkened. As the context relates to spiritual objects, the sun and air must in this passage be understood in a spiritual sense, *i.e.* as belonging to the church. In the preceding trumpet, a third part of the sun is smitten. But the sun of that trumpet is the sun of the political, and not the ecclesiastical heaven, and therefore denotes the Roman imperial power. The smiting of the sun in that trumpet is also quite different from the obscuration of the sun in this. *The smiting* of the third part of the sun, denoted that his body or disk was proportionably affected, and actually shone with diminished lustre. But *the darkening* of the sun, in the fifth trumpet, by means of the smoke from the infernal pit, does not imply any diminution of lustre in him; but only that by means of the smoke, his rays are intercepted so as to render him invisible.

In the heaven ecclesiastical the sun denotes our Lord. It is easy to see how the prevalence of false doctrines in the church, with respect to the mediation of dead saints, and the lawfulness and efficacy of worship addressed to them, and to their images and dry bones, had the effect of hiding Christ, the

* Decline and Fall, chap. xxviii.

only Mediator between God and man, and the Sun of Righteousness, from the eyes of men. The saints and their images and relics having, by the influence of the false doctrines which have been described, been made to occupy the place of Christ, he was necessarily kept out of view.* Having so many other mediators, men had no need of the only true Mediator, and did not seek him. But the smoke from the pit darkened *the air* as well as the sun. The natural air is the medium of respiration and life to our bodies, and also the medium through which the light of the natural sun is communicated to us. The symbolical air or atmosphere, when the symbols of the context are used to denote spiritual objects, may therefore signify the pure and heavenly

* The tendency of saint-worship, to hide Christ from the eyes of men, will appear from the following account of the offerings, made in two successive years, at the altars of Christ, of Thomas a Becket, and the Virgin Mary, at Christ Church, Canterbury, which I copy from a note in Dr. Middleton's Letter from Rome. In one year the offerings stood as follows:—

At Christ's altar	3	25	6
At Becket's	832	12	3
At the Virgin's	63	58	6

The next year's offerings were,

At Christ's altar	0	0	0
At Becket's	954	6	3
At the Virgin's	4	1	8

The following prayer to Christ is given, by the same author, from one of the popish liturgies:—

Tu per Thomæ sanguinem,
Quam pro te impendit,
Fac me Christe scandere,
Quo Thomas ascendit.

These circumstances, it is true, belong to a later age than that of the first woe, but the idolatry of the sixth century was the same in substance as that of the twelfth.

truths of the Gospel, which are, as it were, the element of spiritual respiration to the soul of man, and also the medium through which the saving light of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, is communicated to us. These pure and heavenly truths were obscured and darkened by the mixture of false doctrines, which (like smoke) issued from the pit of the abyss; and the light of the Sun of Righteousness could no longer shine through the medium of the truths of his own Gospel thus corrupted.

Having thus endeavoured to fix the signification of the symbols, we shall find little difficulty in ascertaining who was the fallen star, or apostate Christian bishop, that was the great agent in opening the pit of the abyss. The acknowledged head of the Christian Church during the sixth and seventh centuries was the Pope, or bishop of Rome; and history informs us, not only that the popes gave no opposition to the doctrines respecting the mediation and worship of saints, and the veneration to be paid to their images and bones, but that they were the active and most zealous promoters of these doctrines, and of all the idolatrous practices which pervaded the Christian church. I conceive the Pope of Rome, therefore, to be the fallen star, or apostate bishop, to whom was given the key of the pit of the abyss. Nor will it appear to us wonderful, that such an office should be assigned to him who pretended to be the vicar of Christ upon earth, and the visible head of the church, when we recollect, that the lawful head of the Jewish church, the high priest of the Levitical dispensation, was the chief and principal agent in the crucifixion of Christ.

The sun and the air having been darkened by the smoke of the pit of the abyss, "there came out of "the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them "was given power as the scorpions of the earth "have power."*

An army of locusts, in the language of symbols, signifies an army of hostile invaders. The locusts mentioned in the prophecy of Joel were so understood by the ancient Jewish interpreters, who were well qualified to judge of the meaning of their own symbols.† In the present instance no doubt is left on the subject, as we are informed afterwards, that "the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses "prepared unto battle," &c.

The next remark which I shall make with respect to these symbolical locusts is, that though they appeared to the Apostle John to come out of the black smoke which arose out of the pit of the abyss, yet they in reality came out of the infernal pit itself, and the smoke was only the medium through which they ascended. This appears from the circumstance that their king, who is afterwards mentioned, is the angel or messenger of the pit of the abyss. The fact seems to have been, that the leader of the locust army, taking advantage of the opening of the pit, and the smoky darkness which had overspread the atmosphere, and obscured the sun, came up out of the pit unperceived, and was only seen when with his army he issued forth to execute his commission.

The whole of this highly hieroglyphical description is exactly applicable to the rise of the Mahomedan religion and power; and it is very remarkable that

* Rev. ix. 3. † Vide Dr. Gill on Joel i. 4.

Mr. Gibbon, in describing these events, makes use of language, with respect to the state of the Christian church, at the time when Mahummud appeared, which might almost be supposed to have been borrowed from the Apocalypse. "The Christians of "the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into "a semblance of paganism; their public and private "vows were addressed to the relics and images that "disgraced the temples of the east: *The throne of "the Almighty was darkened by a crowd of martyrs, "and saints, and angels, the objects of popular "veneration;** and the Collyridian heretics, who "flourished in the fruitful soil of Arabia, invested "the Virgin with the name and honours of a "goddess."†

It may be affirmed, almost without the danger of dispute, that Mahummud could not have succeeded in his imposture in an age of light; and that if superstition and gross darkness had not previously overspread Christendom, either his impious fraud had not been attempted, or had been destroyed in embryo.‡ It is, therefore, quite agreeable to the nature of the symbolical language and style, that the army of locusts should be represented as issuing out of the black smoke which had previously pervaded the symbolical atmosphere.

* The reader will not fail to remark the similarity of this language to that of the Apocalypse: "*The sun and the air were darkened by "reason of the smoke.*"

† Gibbon, chap. l.

‡ The passage of 2 Thess. ii. 10, may, without any violence, be accommodated to the state of the Christian world when Mahummud appeared; they received not the love of the truth: therefore God, in just judgment, permitted a lie to prosper in the hand of the impostor, to deceive these degenerate Christians.

The next particular respecting these locusts, which is worthy of observation, is, that "it was commanded "them, that they should not hurt the grass of the "earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree." History informs us, that the following formed a part of the instructions given to the army of Saracens which invaded Syria in the reign of Abubeker, the successor of Mahummud: "Destroy no palm-trees, "nor burn any fields of corn; cut down no fruit-"trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as "you kill to eat."* But the language of this clause may further be designed to show us, that these locusts are not *real*, but *symbolical* locusts.

The locust army were to hurt those men which had not the seal of God in their foreheads. Accordingly, the ravages of the Saracens were chiefly confined to those Christian countries where religion had been most deeply corrupted by saint and image worship. "The parts which remained the freest "from the general infection were Savoy, Piedmont, "and the southern parts of France, which were "afterwards the nurseries and habitations of the "Waldenses and Albigenses; and it is very memo-"rable, that when the Saracens approached these "parts, they were defeated with great slaughter, by "the famous Charles Martel, in several engage-"ments."†

It is said that "they had not power to kill, but "only to torment men." This seems to refer to their having no commission to destroy or overturn, but only to ravage and scourge the eastern empire. Accordingly, it is observed by Bishop Newton on

* Gibbon, chap. li. † Bishop Newton, *in loco.*

this part of the prophecy, that though they besieged Constantinople, and even plundered Rome, they yet could not make themselves masters of either of these cities. They dismembered the eastern empire of some of its best provinces, but they were never able to subdue and conquer the whole; the putting an end to this empire being reserved for another power.

It is said that the locusts had as it were crowns of gold, in allusion probably to the turbans worn by the Arabians: "their faces were as the faces of men, "and they had hair as the hair of women:" and the Arabians wore their beards, or at least mustachoes, as men, while the hair of their heads was flowing or plaited like that of women.* "The sound of their "wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses "running to battle." This clause shows that the locusts were symbols of real armies, and not of hosts of heretics or false teachers, as some have supposed. The tails of the locusts, like unto scorpions, and the stings in their tails, certainly denote the poisonous and mortal effects of the false religion of Mahummud, which always followed the conquests of the Saracens, as they carried their doctrines every where with their arms. It may be remarked here, that it appears from a passage in Isaiah, † that the tail, in the language of symbols, was understood as denoting a false or lying prophet; and by a

* Ibid. It is remarkable, that many of the Mahomedan fakeers, or religious mendicants, in the east, who affect the highest degree of sanctity, still wear their hair long, and plaited in braids round the head, more like women than men.

† Isaiah ix. 15.

common figure of speech, it may denote the false doctrines which such a prophet teaches.*

The five months during which the locusts were to torment men, may be mentioned in conformity to the nature of the type, for locusts are observed to live about five months.† But it has been remarked by all writers, that from the year 612, when Mahummud first began to preach his false doctrines at Mecca, till the year 662, when the Caliph Almansor built Bagdad, and called it the City of Peace, there were exactly one hundred and fifty years, or five prophetic months of thirty days each; and that from this time the Saracens became a settled nation; they ceased to make those extensive and rapid conquests which had distinguished the commencement of their career, and the wars in which they were engaged were from henceforth like the common and ordinary contests of other nations.

By the king over the locusts, whose name is Apollyon, I think, with Bishop Newton, that we may understand the false prophet, and the caliphs his successors. But I deem it not improbable that Satan himself may be intended.

Having, in the foregoing remarks upon the fifth trumpet, adhered in the main to the commonly received interpretation of it, I shall give my reasons for differing from some of the most celebrated inter-

* Perhaps because the tails of many venomous creatures are the seat of their poison.

† Bishop Newton, *in loco.* I confess that I am more inclined here to understand the five months as being mentioned in conformity to the nature of the symbol, than to consider it as indicating a definite period of one hundred and fifty years.

preters, with regard to some particulars of the prophecy of the locusts.

Most writers have supposed the smoke which issued from the pit of the abyss, and obscured the sun and air, to denote the false religion of Mahummud. But to this it may be answered, that before the appearance of the false prophet, the sun and air had been obscured by false doctrines, spread by Christian teachers, and by the gross ignorance both of the clergy and laity. Mahummud, therefore, did not *make* the darkness; he *found* it, and applied it to his own purposes. Moreover, it is plain, that the smoke which darkened the sun, &c. preceded the appearance of the locusts: but the false religion of Mahummud did not precede his armies, it accompanied and followed them: and hence, in the hieroglyphics of this trumpet, its dreadful effects are, with the greatest propriety, exhibited to us by the *tails of the locusts, like the tails of scorpions, and having stings.* Those who suppose the smoke to denote the false doctrines of the prophet, do in effect maintain, that this smoke, which preceded the appearance of the locusts, and the tails of the locusts having stings, are different symbols denoting one and the same thing. But this would be a violation of all the proprieties of the symbolical style.

If, as I think has been proved, the smoke be not an emblem of the false religion of Mahummud, then it is plain, that the fallen star, who opens the pit, cannot, as has been supposed by Bishop Newton, be Mahummud. This work of darkness better suits that fallen and apostate bishop, who calls himself the

Vicar and Apostle of Christ, and the head of his church; and the truth of history forces me to attribute it to him, and no other.*

* Mr. Faber, in the earlier editions of his work on the 1260 years, explained the fallen star to mean Sergius, the apostate monk, who is said to have assisted Mahummud in his work of imposture; but in the fifth edition he has abandoned this interpretation, and, with a candour that does him honour, adopted the one given in these pages. Mr. Faber now, therefore, agrees with me in supposing the star to denote the Pope: but he still maintains, very inconsistently I think, as well as against historical verity, that the smoke which darkened the spiritual atmosphere, was the false religion of Mahummud.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET, OR SECOND WOE.

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a "voice from the four horns of the golden altar "which is before God, saying to the sixth angel "which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which "are bound in the great river Euphrates. And "the four angels were loosed, which were prepared "for the hour, and day, and month, and year, for to "slay the third part of the men." *

The golden altar before God, is the altar of incense in the holy place, upon which, at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice, incense was burnt, typical of the prayers of the saints, when perfumed by the intercession of Christ. The voice from the four horns of the altar, saying to the angel, to loose the four angels, who were to be the executioners of divine anger under this trumpet, implies, that the judgments now to be inflicted, were called for by the prayers of the saints of God, wearied out with the corruptions of the professing church, and crying aloud to him to vindicate his own cause. Or it may signify, that our Lord, the great Intercessor for his people, now called to God to avenge the insults offered to his divine majesty, by the idolatry of the eastern or Greek Christians.

This trumpet manifestly relates to the overthrow of the eastern empire by the Turks or Ottomans, and there is almost an unanimous consent among the

* Rev. ix. 13—15.

best interpreters in referring it to that event. Considerable difference of opinion, however, obtains among them, with regard to the subordinate parts of the vision.

Mede supposes that the four angels who are loosed, denote four Turkish Sultanies, established at Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo and Iconium, which were all at length united under the common empire of the Ottomans, who finally subverted the Greek empire by the capture of Constantinople, in the year 1453. In this interpretation Mede is followed by Bishop Newton, Mr. Faber, and the great body of modern writers. I cannot but think, however, for the following reasons, that it is erroneous.

At the time that the Ottomans overthrew the empire of the East, neither Aleppo, Damascus, nor Bagdad, were under their dominion. Syria formed then a part of the Mameluke kingdom of Egypt. Nor was it till the year 1517, more than half a century after the capture of Constantinople, that Selim I. emperor of the Ottomans, conquered Syria and Egypt, after defeating the Mamelukes in two battles, and thus obtained possession of Aleppo and Damascus.* Bagdad did not become a part of the Turkish empire, until the reign of Solyman I, who took it in the year 1534.†

From what has been said, it plainly appears, that Mede's explanation of the four angels is untenable. It is in fact contrary to the truth of history, and if the four angels were symbols representing any particular kingdoms or nations, we must seek for some other solution of the difficulty.

* Modern Univer. Hist. vol. xii. p. 240—252. † Ibid. p. 293.

We are informed from history, that four different races of Mahomedan conquerors were instrumental in overthrowing the eastern empire; *First,* the Saracens, whose conquests we have seen form the subject of the fifth trumpet: *Secondly,* the Turks of the family of Seljuk, who in the eleventh century, obtained possession of the greatest part of Asia Minor, by conquest from the Greek emperors: *Thirdly,* the Moghul Tartars under Jenghiz Khan, and his successors, who after subjugating the whole of Asia, adopted the Mahomedan faith: *Fourthly,* the Ottomans, whose rise took place about the end of the thirteenth century. Now the Ottoman power concentrated not only its own resources, but all that remained of the three first races of conquerors in the northern Asiatic provinces formerly attached to the Greek empire, and united them under its own dominion. For this reason perhaps its power might be represented by the four angels.*

I confess however that the above solution, does not satisfy my mind; and I shall proceed to offer, what appears to me a better one. With the great body of interpreters I conceive, that the Euphrates means the Turkish nation, which first invaded and conquered the provinces of the eastern empire, situated near that river. They are on that account, and according to the style of prophecy, symbolized by the Euphrates, in the same manner as the Thames might be used to denote the English nation, or the Forth

* This is very analogous to the interpretation of Vitringa and Archdeacon Woodhouse. But both these writers exclude the Saracens from the fifth trumpet, of which they offer other, but discordant explanations. Vitringa interprets it of the Goths invading Italy; Archdeacon Woodhouse of the Gnostic heretics.

the people of Scotland.* Though the Turks obtained possession of some of the Asiatic provinces of the Eastern empire, as early as the eleventh century, yet they were by the providence of God and by means of the Crusades, prevented from then overrunning the empire. But at length the cup of its iniquity being filled up, they became the ordained instruments of vengeance, for its complete subversion. To signify both the former limits which had been assigned to their conquests, and the office of wrath now committed to them, the power of the Turks or Ottomans, is represented under the symbol of four angels, which had been tied up, or restrained, in the great river Euphrates, but are now to be let loose, in order that they may slay the third part of men. It will here however be asked, why is the precise number of four selected for this end? I answer, that four is one of the mystical numbers of the Apocalypse, denoting what is complete, or entire.† In

* I have already shewn, (see page 68,) that the symbolical waters signify "peoples, nations, and multitudes," Rev. xvii. 15; therefore a particular river denotes a particular people: and it is easy to see, that no river could have been selected so fitly as the Euphrates to designate the Turks.

† "Quaternarius enim numerus in Apocalypsi sæpe est mysticus, "estque inter numeros plenitudinis sive perfectos qui dicuntur respi-"ciens quatuor climata cœli." Vitringa in loco.

"This number is used frequently in Scripture to denote universality, "or completion. It has this force naturally from the figure or for-"mation of the human body, which is so fashioned as to occasion "a fourfold division of the objects which surround it; so that under "the number four they are comprehended. For instance: a man "face; one quarter of the horizon, the south, he has the north behind "him; his hands extended point to the east and west. Hence is "derived in Scripture the determination of these four cardinal points, "and their corresponding winds, "the four winds of heaven." And

chap. viii. 1. a period of universal peace in the midst of the earthquake of the sixth seal, is represented by *four* angels, holding the *four* winds of the earth. The overthrow of the Western empire is also signified in chap. viii. by the *four* angels with the *four* first trumpets. In a similar manner, as the eastern empire was to be completely subverted by the Turks, their power is represented, under the symbol of *four* destroying angels.

The four angels were "prepared for the hour, "and day, and month, and year, for to slay the third "part of men." I have seen no explanation of this note of time, which satisfies my mind. Mede, Bishop Newton, and others, suppose, that it marks a prophetical period of 391 years, during which the conquests of the Ottomans were to be carried on.* But in every other passage of the scriptures where a mysterious number is given signifying a particular prophetical period, it will be found that the number has in the original Greek no article prefixed to it. In the passage now under consideration, on the contrary, the definite article is prefixed to the first number of the series, ἡτοιμασμενοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν, &c. and the expression ought accordingly to have been rendered in our English version, "prepared for *the* hour, &c." I think that this circumstance overthrows the inter-

"thus "the four corners of the land," are used to signify *all* the "land; whence Philo says, Παντα εν τη τετραδι. So Pythagoras: "Tetras omnium perfectissimus, radix omnium." Archdeacon Woodhouse on Rev. iv. 4.

* A Jewish year is 360 days, and a month 30 days; these two numbers being added to the one day, make 391 prophetical days; and each day being reckoned for a year, in this way a period of 391 years is made out.

pretation of Mede, and I am inclined to believe, that nothing more is denoted by the expression, than that the precise period, when the angels were to begin their devastations, and also the term of their continuance, were minutely fixed in the divine counsels.*

I think with Bishop Newton, Mr. Faber, and others, that the slaughter of the third part of *the men*, by the four angels, signifies, the subversion of the eastern empire. The western empire had already been exhibited, in the four first trumpets, under the figure of a symbolical universe, and its subversion by the Gothic arms was denoted, by the destruction of a third part of that universe. The eastern empire is now placed before us as a political community, under the generic appellation of "the "men;" and its overthrow is in a similar manner signified, by the slaughter of a third part of "the "men."

The forces of the angels are afterwards described as consisting of two hundred thousand thousands horsemen, by which an indefinitely great multitude is intended; and it is well known that the Turkish armies chiefly consisted of horse, particularly in

* Mr. Faber, in the first editions of his work, followed the explanation of the hour, day, month, and year, offered by Mede; but in his fifth edition he has given it up as untenable, and supposes that it alludes to the circumstance of the precise day of the assault of the city of Constantinople having been fixed by Mahomed II. according to the rules of astrology. "Several days," says Gibbon, "were "employed by the sultan in preparations for the assault; and a "respite was granted by his favourite science of astrology, which "had fixed on the twenty-ninth of May as the fortunate and fatal "hour."

the earlier part of their history. It is said that they had breastplates of fire, and hyacinth, and brimstone; or in other words, red, blue, and yellow. This, says Bishop Newton, (from Daubuz) "had a "literal accomplishment, for the Ottomans from "their first appearance have affected to wear such "warlike apparel of scarlet, blue, and yellow." "The heads of their horses were as the heads of "lions."—This may denote the fierceness and impetuosity of their onset. "Out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone."—Here there seems to be an allusion to the enormous artillery used by Mahummud II. in the siege of Constantinople, "by the instrumentality of which he chiefly succeeded in taking that city, and in thus slaying the "apocalyptic third part of men."*

It is added that "their power is in their mouth "and their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do "hurt." The power in the mouths of the horses, seems to indicate the power of inflicting temporal ill. The power in their tails, is however certainly indicative of the spiritual venom of the false religion of Mahummud, which every where followed their conquests. These heads in their tails, are the seat of their poison, in the same manner as were the stings in the tails of the locusts of the preceding vision, and must therefore be interpreted on a like principle.

I have thus endeavoured to trace the accomplishment of the six first trumpets, in the subversion of the Roman empire of the west, and its ruin in the

* Mr. Faber *in loco.*

east, by a series of events, whereof the mighty consequences continue even now to operate, upon the political, the intellectual and religious destinies of the human race, and which seem therefore, every way worthy of finding a place in this mysterious prophecy. The narrative being thus brought down to a very important era in history, new and no less important subjects are introduced in the following chapters, which will call for our most earnest attention.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VISION OF THE ANGEL WITH AN OPEN BOOK.

After the sounding of the sixth trumpet, relating to the fall of the eastern empire by the sword of the Turks, a prophetic intimation is given, that the plagues of the preceding trumpets did not produce the effects of repentance on those men who were not destroyed by them. In this notice there is probably a peculiar allusion to the corruptions of the Latin church, and to those more awful judgments which they should bring down upon the inhabitants of the Western empire.

A new and august object afterwards exhibited itself to the eyes of the apostle. "And I saw "another mighty angel coming down from heaven, "clothed with a cloud,"* to veil the effulgent brightness of his glory; "a rainbow on his head," the same emblem which surrounds the throne of God,† and denotes the covenant of peace; "his "face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of "fire;" which particulars agree with the description given of our Lord in the first chapter. "He "had in his hand a little book open," or "having "been opened."

It is easy to see from the above most sublime description, that this angel is our Lord himself; for the glorious attributes ascribed to the angel cannot agree with any other than our Lord. Let the circumstance also of the angel holding in his hand "a

* Rev. x. 1. † Ib. iv. 3.

"little book which had been opened," be compared with what is said in a former part of the Apocalypse: "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the "Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, "and to loose the seven seals thereof;"—"and he "came and took the book out of the right hand of "him that sat upon the throne."* And by connecting these passages with the one we are now considering, it will appear with irresistible evidence, that the holder of this little book can only be the Lion of the tribe of Judah; for it was not given to any other, even to *look on the book*, much less to hold it.

"And he set his right foot upon the sea and his "left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, "as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, "seven thunders uttered their voices. And when "the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was "about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven, "saying unto me, Seal up those things which the "seven thunders uttered, and write them not. "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, "lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him "who liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven "and the things that therein are, and the earth and "the things that therein are, and the sea and the "things which are therein, That there should be "time no longer; but in the days of the voice of "the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, "the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath "declared to his servants the prophets."†

Having shown above, that the angel seen in this

* Rev. v. 5. 7. † Ib. x. 2—7.

vision is our Lord himself, I shall now endeavour to ascertain to what precise period of time this descent of Christ belongs.

The whole vision has an evident reference to a similar one in the conclusion of the prophecies of Daniel;* and when the two passages are carefully compared, and it is further recollected that the Apocalypse is only a more enlarged prophecy of the same things as are contained in the book of Daniel, we shall see reason to conclude, that the descent of our Lord from heaven to earth, having a little book in his hand, which had been opened, and which is afterwards given to the apostle to eat, *i. e.* digest and understand, is intended to signify, that the time is at length arrived when these obscure prophecies of the book of Daniel, which were twice declared to be shut up and sealed unto the time of the end, should be fully understood by the servants of the Lord. Our Lord's descent, therefore, belongs to the time of the end.

The time of the end evidently reaches to the close of the seventh Apocalyptic trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;† when also the Son of Man shall come with the clouds of heaven to receive the kingdom promised to him in the prophecies of Daniel;‡ And the time of the seventh trumpet is likewise, as has been proved by some of the ablest interpreters, the signal for the pouring out of the seven vials of wrath afterwards mentioned.§ The time of the end is also the period which immediately

* Dan. xii. 4. 9. † Rev. xi. 15.
‡ Dan. vii. 13, 14. § Rev. xv. 7.

precedes "the times of refreshing," and of "the "restitution of all things;" until which the heaven must receive the Son of God, as declared by St. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles.*

Since, then, the descent of our Lord, which is now under consideration, belongs to the time of the end, and of the seventh trumpet and seven vials, we may hence discover a reason for the various circumstances which accompany and follow this descent. Our Lord appears clothed with a cloud, to signify that the hour is at hand, when he shall come with the clouds of heaven. The rainbow is upon his head, which is the emblem of the covenant of peace; because the blessed time is at length arrived, when the influence of his peace-giving Gospel shall be extended from the rising to the setting of the sun. He has in his hand a little book opened, for the reason already assigned, viz. that the period is come when its prophecies shall be completely understood by the church of God. He sets his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, to denote to his servant John, that he is now about to take possession of the universal kingdom promised to him by the Father, when all the kingdoms of this world shall become his kingdom. His crying with a loud voice, as a lion roareth, is emblematical of the awful sounding of the seventh trumpet; and it seems to signify to us, that the voice of that trumpet is in effect the voice of the Lion of the tribe of Judah himself, denouncing vengeance against his enemies. The seven thunders which utter their voices, are emblematical of the seven vials of the

* Acts iii. 19—21.

wrath of God, which are poured out on the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The apostle is forbidden to write what the thunders had uttered, probably because their contents were to be fully declared and shown forth under a different symbol, viz. that of the pouring out of the vials; and it did not seem necessary to the Holy Ghost to describe them twice.

The above conjecture, as to the meaning of the emblematical roaring of our Lord, is confirmed by what follows; for, in evident allusion to the voice which he had previously uttered, he immediately swears, in the awful name of him that liveth for ever and ever, "That there should be time no "longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh "angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery "of God should be finished, as he hath declared to "his servants the prophets." This seems to be declared in reference to the finishing of the mysterious times mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel.* On this point Mede says expressly, "That those "finishing times of the fourth beast, called a time, "times, and half a time, during which the wicked "horn should domineer and ruffle it among his ten "kings, are the self-same time which the angel, in "St. John, forewarneth should be no longer, as "soon as the seventh angel began to sound."†

These mysterious times being ended, and the period come when the prophecies of Daniel, and consequently of the Apocalypse, are to be completely opened and unsealed, a voice from heaven commands the apostle to go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel. The book

* Dan. xii. 7. † Mede's Works, Book iv. ep. 8.

is accordingly given him to eat, or thoroughly to understand and digest. It ought to be remarked, that in this symbolical action of eating the opened book, the apostle is the representative of the church; and that the action signifies, that now the sealed prophecies should be unsealed and understood by the church of God.

The only thing that remains to be considered in this vision, is what is signified by the little book in the hand of our Lord; and the determination of this point has greatly perplexed the interpreters of the Apocalypse. Whatever were the contents of this little book (βιβλαριδιον), it seems, without question, that it must be a part of the book (βιβλιον) before mentioned, having seven seals. It is probable that this book consisted of seven distinct rolls enveloped one under the other, the seventh roll being the inmost one; and each roll had its distinct seal. Each of these rolls was most probably considered as a "little book," or βιβλαριδιον; and it seems that the little book, which was in the hand of our Lord when he descended from heaven to earth, was the roll or seal last opened, viz. the seventh, which contained the prophecy of the seven trumpets, and indeed the whole remaining part of the Apocalypse. The circumstance of its being a little book, "*having been opened,*" as the original properly signifies, sufficiently evinces that at one time it had been sealed. But if it had been sealed, either it must be a part or division of the book with seven seals, or there must have been more than one sealed book, which is exceedingly improbable. For it may be observed, that the seals being *seven*, which number

signifies completeness or perfection, this very circumstance indicates, that when that book with seven seals should be wholly unsealed, it would completely reveal and discover the whole of the mystery of God. Now, if we go into the idea of many interpreters, that the little book was a kind of supplementary prophecy, or codicil to the book with seven seals, we thereby suppose the book with seven seals to have been an imperfect prophecy, which is contradictory to the import of the symbolical description given of it. Where, in this case, was the fitness of the exhortation to the Apostle, "Weep not; for "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, "hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the "seven seals thereof." For, according to the opinion which I am refuting, when these seven seals were unloosed there remained other no less important prophecies still sealed up.* The idea of a separate codicil must therefore be rejected, and the little book opened is certainly a part of the sealed book: and we may conclude, that it is the seventh seal, that being the one whose contents were now unfolding.†

* Rev. v. 5.

† A reviewer of my work, in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, to whom I feel myself much obliged for the candid and indulgent manner in which he treats it, has made some remarks upon my hypothesis respecting the little book. So far as I understand this respectable writer, he seems to me to wish to establish the identity of the little book, with that portion of the book of Daniel which contains his last prophecy, and, in chap. xii. 9, is declared to be closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Now this identity I have already admitted, as to the substance of the two prophecies, i. e. in the same sense that the Gospel of St. Luke may be identified with that of St. Matthew. But if it be meant, that the book in the hand of the angel was the identical volume of Daniel's last prophecy, I can see no ground for this opinion. On the contrary, its truth seems to be negatived by the simple circumstance, that St. John's prophecy

The giving of this seventh seal to the apostle to eat or digest, has perhaps a peculiar reference to his being made to understand what that mystery of God is, which is to be finished at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Accordingly, no sooner does he eat the little book, and digest it, than he is commanded again to prophesy to many peoples, nations, and tongues, and kings; that is, he is openly to declare to them this great mystery, which forms, as I conceive, the principal subject of the next three chapters. And I shall so far anticipate the contents of these chapters, as to state that this mystery seems to consist in the wonderful circumstance of God permitting the enemies of Christ to reign triumphantly in his visible professing church, and to deform, corrupt, and degrade that church, during the prophetical period of twelve hundred and sixty days.

And hence we discover why the contents of this little book were so bitter to the mind of the apostle, which is declared symbolically under the figure of its making his belly bitter. The apostle felt the deepest interest in the future fortunes of the church of Christ, and had therefore an eager desire to learn the contents of the little book. This eager desire is described under the symbol of its being in his mouth sweet as honey; but when he understood what the little book actually discovered concerning the above mystery, it could not but occasion to him the bitterest emotions of sorrow.

contains many new facts, not mentioned in that of Daniel; and, on the other hand, Daniel's prophecy has many circumstances not included in St. John's. It appears to me certain, however, that St. John's prophecy was the key for opening or unsealing that of Daniel, as I have already observed in the preceding pages.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE TWO WITNESSES.

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; "and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure "the temple of God and the altar, and them that "worship therein. But the court that is without "the temple, leave out and measure it not; for it "is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall "they tread under foot forty and two months." *

The tabernacle of the temple of the Lord contained several parts or divisions. The innermost of these was the most holy place, or holy of holies, containing the ark of the covenant, the tables of the law, the mercy-seat overshadowed by the cherubim of glory. Into this innermost division of the temple, the high priest alone was permitted to enter; and that only once in the year, on the great day of atonement.† This holy of holies was a type of heaven, into which Christ, the great High Priest of our profession, is entered for us; and also a symbol of that future and glorious state of the church upon earth, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men. Accordingly, when the state of the church in that period is exhibited to the apostle, under the appearance of a vast multitude clothed in white, and having branches of palm-trees in their hands, it is said, that they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night *in his temple*‡ (i. e. in the holy of holies), where, under the Levitical dispensation, the high

* Rev. xi. 1, 2. † Heb. ix. 7. ‡ Rev. vii. 15.

priest only could enter once a year; and where, under the evangelical dispensation, Christ is for us entered, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. In confirmation of the foregoing observations, it appears, that on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which introduces the glorious state of the church, "the temple of God was opened "in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the "ark of his testament." * It was the holy of holies, therefore, which was opened to common view, otherwise the ark could not have been seen. When the same glorious state of the church, as had before been exhibited under the emblem of the palm-bearing multitude, is again shown forth under the symbol of a city, the New Jerusalem, it is emphatically said by the apostle, "I saw no temple therein." † The reason of this is plain: the scene is laid in the holy of holies, the innermost recess of the temple; there is not, therefore, and cannot be, any other temple than He who inhabiteth the temple, even the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb. The antitype being come, the type vanishes away.‡

The second division of the temple of God was the sanctuary, or holy place, which was next to the holy of holies, and separated therefrom by the veil. In the holy place were placed the golden candlestick with seven branches, the golden altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread. It is easy to perceive that the holy place was a symbol of the true, spiritual church of God upon earth. The holy place had no

* Rev. xi. 19. † Ibid. xxi. 22.

‡ "Hierosolyma hæc tota in emphasi esset thronus Dei "Ipsa itaque tota esset templum Dei." Vitringa *in loco.*

light from without: it was enlightened only by the lamps of the golden candlestick with seven branches. This candlestick was a symbol of the Holy Spirit,* called, in the figurative language of this book, from the fulness and completeness of his gifts and operations, "the Seven Spirits," *i. e.* the All-perfect and Infinite Spirit of God. In the same manner, the true spiritual church of Christ has no light from without, but is internally illuminated by the Holy Ghost. Incense, as we have already seen, is a symbol of the prayers of the saints. It is only in the true spiritual church that such prayers are offered, and they are symbolized by the incense burnt upon the golden altar in the holy place. There was no way into the holy of holies but through the holy place: and so there is no way into heaven, the true holy of holies, but by entering into, or becoming members of, the true spiritual church of Christ. The holy place was hidden from the view of those without by a second veil; and thus the true spiritual church of Christ is hidden from the view of the world, and is therefore, with strict justice and propriety, called the invisible church. Into the typical holy place it was not lawful for any to enter but the priests, and none can enter into the true church (*i. e.* become members of it), but they who are made priests unto God. In all respects the type, therefore, answers to the antitype.

Along with the sanctuary, or holy place, the Spirit of God, in this passage, classes the altar (*i. e.* the altar of burnt offerings), which was placed in a court or enclosure immediately before the entrance into the

* Rev. iv. 5.

sanctuary. This altar of burnt offerings, and the sacrifices offered upon it, were symbols of the sacrifice of Christ. The altar of burnt offerings was immediately before the door of the holy place, which points out to us, that no one can enter into the holy place, or become a member of the spiritual church, but in virtue of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, received by true faith. The court in which was the altar of burnt offerings, was open only to the priests and Levites, and seems to be the same as was called the priest's court: but it was visible from without to the people who were in the external court, which signifies that the sacrifice of Christ is to be held up to the view of all men, in order that they may believe and be saved.

On the outside of the court of the altar, or priest's court, was the larger court, accessible to the whole people of Israel. This outer court, or, as it is here called, the court without the temple, seems to have been a symbol of the visible professing church of God, as distinguished from the true and invisible church.

Having thus endeavoured to ascertain what were the several divisions of the temple of God, and their symbolical meaning, it is not difficult to determine which of these parts or compartments were measured by the Apostle John.

The holy of holies could not be the subject of this measurement, as it was shut during the period of the testimony of the witnesses, and was not opened till after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as is declared in the 19th verse of this chapter. What the apostle is commanded to measure, is therefore

certainly the holy place, or sanctuary, and the interior court, or court of the priests, including the altar of burnt offerings. These two being symbolical of the invisible church, the measuring of them by the apostle signifies, that during the period of forty-two months, when the Gentiles should tread under foot the holy city, God would still have a chosen seed to serve him, who, though small in number, should yet be well known to him, and precious in his sight. To measure, signifies to take account of. But the apostle is commanded to leave out the court that is without the temple, and not to measure it, as it was given to the Gentiles, *i. e.* to men who, though Christians in name, and pretending to worship God, and tread his courts, were in character Gentiles; and it is added, that they shall tread or trample under foot, or, as Archdeacon Woodhouse renders the clause, they shall tread or occupy the holy city forty and two months. The holy city certainly means the visible professing church of Christ; and the undisturbed occupation of it by Gentiles, who are unworthy of being measured, or taken account of, signifies its deep and universal degeneracy during the prophetical period above mentioned, the meaning of which will be investigated afterwards.

"And I will give *(power)* unto my two wit-
"nesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand and
"two hundred and threescore days, clothed in
"sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the
"two candlesticks standing before the God of the
"earth."

The true spiritual church of Christ, or collective

body of the faithful, is here presented to our view under three different emblems: *First*, that of two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, the garb of mourning, during the period of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, and testifying against the general corruption and degeneracy of the professing church: *secondly*, under the symbol of two candlesticks, as holding forth the light of truth to a world involved in spiritual darkness: and, *thirdly*, as two olive trees, to denote the abundant supplies of the Holy Spirit, at all times given to the true church. The meaning of the whole passage is, that in the midst of the general corruption of the *visible* church, God would raise up a small number of faithful men, a truly spiritual church, that should witness for the truth during the whole period of one thousand two hundred and sixty days, which is the same as the forty-two months, when the Gentiles were to occupy the holy city. History shows that this prophecy has received its fulfilment; and for his satisfaction on this point, I must refer the reader to Bishop Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies (in which are enumerated the faithful witnesses who appeared even in the darkest ages of the church), and likewise to Milner's History of the Church of Christ.*

* Mr. Gibbon, after narrating the persecution of the Albigeois, has the following passage: "The visible assemblies of the Paulicians, "or Albigeois, were extirpated by fire and sword; and the bleeding "remnant escaped by flight, concealment, or catholic conformity. "But the invincible spirit which they had kindled, still lived and "breathed in the western world. In the state, in the church, and "even in the cloister, a latent succession was preserved of the dis-"ciples of St. Paul, who protested against the tyranny of Rome, "embraced the Bible as the rule of faith, and purified their creed

It is said of the witnesses, that "if any man will "hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, "and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will "hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." The prophets, in the scriptural style, are often said to do those things which they denounce. "I will "make my word in thy mouth fire," says the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah, "and this people wood, "and it shall consume them." In the above words respecting the fire proceeding from the mouth of the witnesses, we may also see the indestructible nature of the church of Christ. "Lo," said our Lord, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of "the world." Every attempt to destroy the church shall therefore fail of success, and shall issue only in the ruin of her enemies. In this sense fire may be said to issue from the mouth of the witnesses.

By the same rules we may explain the language of the following verse: "These have power to shut "heaven, that it rain not in the days of their pro-"phecy; and have power over waters to turn them "to blood; and to smite the earth with all plagues, "as often as they will." The shutting of heaven is the shutting up ~~the spiritual church, so that~~ the dew of God's word and Spirit shall not descend upon the apostate inhabitants of the Roman earth.* This

"from all the visions of the Gnostic theology. The struggles of "Wickliff in England, of Huss in Bohemia, were premature and "ineffectual; but the names of Zuinglius, Luther, and Calvin, are "pronounced with gratitude as the deliverers of nations."—Decline and Fall, chap. liv. How striking a testimony is here given, by an enemy to Christianity, of the fulfilment of prophecy! Gibbon writing an involuntary comment on St. John!

* Faber's Dissertation on the 1260 years, vol. ii. p. 59. 4th Ed.

is the consequence of the neglect and contempt shown to their ministry; and it is a dispensation of the same nature as took place in the days of the prophet Isaiah, when he was commanded to "make "the heart of this people fat, and make their ears "heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with "their eyes, and hear with their ears, and under-"stand with their heart, and convert and be healed."* Where a people refuse to repent at the preaching of the Gospel, God in just judgment withdraws his Spirit; and, in the symbolical style, he shuts up heaven, so that it shall not rain. The witnesses are also said to turn waters into blood, and to smite the earth with plagues, because such judgments are inflicted on the guilty nations, for refusing to hear the testimony of the witnesses.

"And when they shall be about finishing (or shall "be accomplishing) their testimony, the beast that "ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war "against them, and shall overcome them, and kill "them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the broad "street of the great city, which spiritually is called "Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was "crucified. And they of the peoples, and kindreds, "and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies "three days and a half, and shall not suffer their "dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that "dwell upon the earth, shall rejoice over them and "make merry, and shall send gifts one to another, "because these two prophets tormented them that "dwell on earth. And after three days and a half, "the spirit of life from God entered into them, and

* Isaiah vi. 10.

"they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon "them which saw them; and they heard a great "voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up "hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, "and their enemies beheld them."

The death and resurrection of the witnesses, whatever events may be intended thereby, happen, as we learn from the concluding clause of the above passage, before the end of the second woe, and consequently before the coming of the third woe. But the second woe is the invasion of the Roman empire, and conquest of its eastern branch by the Turks. At the time when I write this, the Turkish power still exists, but it has long ceased to exist as a woe; indeed it is so rapidly declining, that its final extinction cannot be very remote. On the other hand, the third woe is the French Revolution, as I shall endeavour to prove afterwards, and shall for the present assume, for the sake of argument. But if the second woe be past, and the third woe be come, then the death, resurrection, and ascension of the witnesses must also be past; and we thus far are enabled, on certain data, to fix the chronology of these events, and to ascertain one most important point in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, which has greatly perplexed the expositors. As it continues to be the opinion of some writers, that the death of the witnesses is yet to come, the foregoing argument serves also to shew that the fears of many pious and excellent persons on this head are happily without foundation.

The death and resurrection of the witnesses being thus past, it only remains to ascertain to what events

they apply. After the most attentive examination, I rest in the opinion of Mr. Faber, that this part of the prophecy received its accomplishment at the era of the reformation, in the events which followed the dissolution of the Smalcaldic league. I must refer the reader to that able writer for the detailed history of these events, of which I shall only give a short abstract.

At the close of the year 1546, the confederacy of Smalcalde, which had been formed by the protestant princes of Germany, for the defence of their religion, fell to pieces. Only the Elector of Saxony, and Landgrave of Hesse, remained in arms. On the 24th of April, 1547, the Elector was totally routed and taken prisoner by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, at the battle of Muhlberg. The Landgrave was ere long obliged to submit likewise, and by a dishonourable stratagem was seized and confined by the Emperor.

In the following year, a new system of doctrine, which was afterwards styled the Interim, and which had been prepared by the command of the Emperor, was presented to the Diet assembled at Augsburg, to receive their sanction as a general rule of faith in Germany, till a council could be convocated. In the above system, the obnoxious doctrines of popery were retained, though they were expressed, for the most part, in the softest words, or in scriptural phrases, or in terms of studied ambiguity. The interim was presented and read in the Diet on the 15th of May, 1548. As soon as the reading of it was finished, the Archbishop of Mentz, president of the Electoral College, rose up hastily; and having

thanked the Emperor for his unwearied and pious endeavours, in order to restore peace to the church, he, in the name of the Diet, signified their approbation of the system of doctrine which had been read, together with their resolution of conforming to it in every particular. No member of the Diet had the courage to contradict what the Elector had said; some being overawed by fear, others remaining silent through complaisance. Charles held the Archbishop's declaration to be a full, constitutional ratification of the interim, and prepared to enforce the observance of it as a decree of the empire.*

Some of the most considerable of the protestant princes of the empire were prevailed upon, or intimidated by the Emperor, to receive the interim with implicit obedience. From the imperial cities he met with a firmer resistance, but they were compelled one after another to submit. The government of the city of Augsburg was dissolved by force, and a small number of persons appointed to administer its affairs, who all took an oath to observe the interim. At Ulm the protestant pastors were seized by the Emperor, and such of them as refused to subscribe the interim were committed to prison, and at the departure of Charles were carried along with him in chains.† Similar measures were adopted with regard to the other refractory cities. In most of the cities of Suabia, the protestant clergy were ejected by violence. The reformed worship was almost entirely suppressed through that extensive province. The people were compelled to attend the

* Robertson's Charles V. Book x. † Ibid.

ministration of priests, whom they regarded with horror as idolaters; and to submit to the jurisdiction of magistrates, whom they detested as usurpers.*

The death of the witnesses, as Mr. Faber rightly argues, took place when they were silenced, and compelled to desist from bearing testimony. This was effected by the promulgation and enforcement of the interim, in the year 1548. About three years and a half afterwards, or towards the end of the year 1551, Maurice of Saxony, who had long meditated the deliverance of the protestants, and had been preparing to attempt this object, though he had concealed his intentions with the greatest care, commenced his operations by demanding the release of the captive Landgrave of Hesse. This demand being eluded by Charles, early in the following season, Maurice placed himself at the head of his army, and took the field. He published a manifesto, containing his reasons for taking arms: and the first of these was, that he might secure the protestant religion, which was threatened with immediate destruction. As he advanced by rapid marches towards Upper Germany, all the towns opened their gates to him. He every where reinstated the magistrates whom the Emperor had deposed, and gave possession of the churches to the protestant ministers whom he had ejected.

"No words," says the historian, "can express the "Emperor's astonishment and consternation at events "so unexpected."† He attempted to negociate with Maurice, but without effect. Maurice consented to a conference with Ferdinand, the brother of Charles,

* Robertson's Charles V. Book x. † Ibid.

but afterwards rejoined his army, and marched directly towards Inspruck, where the Emperor then was, with a view of surprising him, and obtaining possession of his person. "The Emperor was in-
"formed of the approaching danger late in the
"evening, and knowing that nothing could save him
"but a speedy flight, he instantly left Inspruck,
"without regarding the darkness of the night, or
"the violent rain which happened to fall at the time;
"and notwithstanding his being so much debilitated
"by the gout, that he could bear no motion but that
"of a litter, he travelled by the light of torches,
"taking his way over the Alps, by ways almost
"impassable. His courtiers and attendants followed
"him with equal precipitation, some of them on
"such horses as they could hastily procure, many
"of them on foot, and all in the utmost confusion.
"In this miserable plight, very unlike the pomp
"with which Charles had appeared during the five
"preceding years, as the conqueror of Germany,
"he arrived at length, with his dejected train, at
"Villach, in Carinthia, and scarce thought himself
"secure even in that remote inaccessible corner."*

The operations of Maurice had also the effect of immediately breaking up the Council of Trent. The fathers of the council being seized with a general consternation, on receiving the intelligence of his having taken up arms, the German prelates returned home, and the rest were impatient to depart. A decree was consequently issued for proroguing the council, and it did not again meet for a period of ten years.

* Robertson's Charles V. Book x.

These interesting and important events were immediately followed by the treaty of Passau; in which it was stipulated that neither the Emperor nor any other prince should, on any pretext whatever offer any injury or violence to such as adhered to the confession of Augsburg, but allow them to enjoy the free and undisturbed exercise of their religion; and that the imperial chamber should administer justice impartially, both to catholics and protestants; and protestants be admitted indiscriminately with catholics to sit in that court.

The security of the protestants was still further confirmed by a recess of the Diet of Augsburg, in the year 1555, containing various provisions in their favour.

The importance of the treaty of Passau cannot be better shown, than by quoting the following observations of the historian of the reign of Charles the Fifth upon it. "Such was the memorable "treaty of Passau, that overturned the vast fabric, "in erecting which Charles had employed so many "years, and had exerted the utmost efforts of his "power and policy; that annulled all his regu-"lations with regard to religion; defeated all his "hopes of rendering the imperial authority absolute "and hereditary in his family; and established the "protestant church, which had hitherto subsisted "precariously in Germany, through connivance, or "by expedients, upon a firm and secure basis."*

* Hist. Charles V. Book x.

Villers, in his Essay on the Reformation, gives the following summary of the events of this period:—"Enfin le moment arriva (en "1546, l'année même de la mort de Luther, qui avait fait des efforts

If the death of the witnesses happened at the publication of the interim, their revival took place when Maurice commenced his operations against Charles. At the peace of Passau, they ascended into heaven (*i. e.* into the symbolical heaven of the government), by being legally established and permitted, in common with the catholics, and on an equal footing, to sit as judges in the imperial chamber. By the recess of the Diet of Augsburg, framed on the 25th of September, 1555, they were yet more firmly established in the political heaven. It was thereby enacted, that those princes and cities which had declared their approbation of the confession of Augsburg, should meet with no molestation in the exercise of their worship; and further, that the Romish ecclesiastics should claim no spiritual jurisdiction in such states as received the confession of Augsburg. There were other articles in the recess equally favourable to the protestants.

" constans pour prévenir toute catastrophe sanglante), où, débarrassé " de ses autres ennemis, Charles Quint put engager la lutte avec le " parti des protestans. Elle fut d'abord heureuse pour lui; les forces " et les talens militaires des princes ligués ne répondirent pas à leur " courage; et l'éclatante victoire de Muhlburg, dès la seconde année " de la guerre, où les principaux d'entre eux furent faits prisonniers, " semblait devoir y mettre fin. Mais à peine *Charles* commençait-il " à jouir de son triomphe, que *Maurice de Saxe* lui enleva, par un " coup aussi impossible à prévoir qu'à parer les lauriers qu'il venait " de cueillir, et presque tous ceux de sa laborieuse carrière. Peu " s'en fallut que le prince Saxon ne s'emparât de la personne même " de l'empereur dans Inspruck. Celui-ci, par la paix signée à Passau, " en 1552, affermit plus que jamais l'existence du corps évangélique, " et vit s'évanouir les beaux projets qu'il avait conçus de ranger " l'Allemagne sous ses lois."—Essai sur l'Esprit et sur l'Influence de la Réformation de Luther, par Charles Villers, Correspondant de l'Institut National de France, &c. p. 119.

I have it happily in my power, to illustrate the foregoing application of the prophecy, by a very remarkable passage from Fra Paolo Sarpi, the catholic historian of the council of Trent. After narrating the events of the contest, which ended at the peace of Passau, that writer uses the following language, with respect to the restoration of the Protestant pastors. "But the war still continued "for a whole year, between different princes and "cities of the empire. It did not however prevent "the cities, from recalling every where the doctors "of the confession of Augsburg, and from restoring "to them their churches and schools, and the free "exercise of their religion. And although it might "have been thought, that there remained very few "of these doctors and preachers, (who had taken "refuge under the protection of princes,) and that "banishments and persecutions had almost ex-"terminated them; yet *as if they had been again* "*raised from the dead*, a sufficient number were "found to supply all the places." *

This war of the witnesses, and their death, was to take place in the broad street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. The great city is, as all writers are agreed, the Roman empire.† This empire bears the name of Sodom and Egypt, on account of the wickedness of its inhabitants. Within the precincts of the empire our Lord was crucified,

* Fra Paolo Sarpi, Histoire du Concile de Trente, tom. i. p. 612. The words of the French translation are, "*cependant comme s'ils* "*etoient resuscitez de nouveau.*"

† See the authorities produced by Mr. Faber on this point, Diss. on the 1260 years, vol. ii. p. 80, 81. 4th Ed.

since at the time of his passion Judea was a Roman province. Here also he is still crucified again every day, by the sins of those who profess themselves his disciples. The broad street of the great city must signify its principal kingdom. Now at the period when the events above mentioned took place, Germany was the principal kingdom, and therefore the broad street of the great city; being immediately subject to the secular head of the empire, and emphatically styled "*the empire.*"

The agent who slew the witnesses was the beast which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit; and he is the same as Daniel's fourth beast, and represents the Roman empire.* This also confirms the above ideas respecting the death of the witnesses, as the league of Smalcalde was dissolved, and its most powerful members defeated and made prisoners, and the protestant ministers silenced, all by Charles the Fifth, at that time the secular head of the Roman empire.

We have thus seen that the events, which happened in Germany after the dissolution of the Smalcaldic league, answer in every respect to the prophetical account of the death of the witnesses, their resurrection and ascension. *First,* In their *chronology;* they happened during the second woe, and before the arrival of the third woe. *Secondly,* In their geography; they happened in the chief kingdom of the Roman empire, *i. e.* the broad street of the great city. *Thirdly,* In their character and circumstances: the witnesses were then politically slain, forced to desist from their testimony, and to receive

* Faber's Dissertation, vol. ii. p. 65, 66.

the interim. They stood on their feet at the end of little more than three years and a half. They next ascended into the political heaven, by virtue of a solemn treaty of peace, confirmed afterwards by the Diet of the empire. The agent of their death was the beast, *i. e.* the secular head of the Roman empire.

It is said, however, that the witnesses ascended up to heaven *in a cloud*. This may signify, that though they triumphed, yet there were many circumstances which contributed to dim the lustre of their victory, and to obscure their prospects. There was much worldly policy and wisdom mingled with the religious zeal of the protestants. Many dark clouds also still hung over the protestant cause, and threatened it with new troubles.

"And the same hour," (or "the same day," as Griesbach reads), "was there a great earthquake, "and the tenth part of the city fell; and in the "earthquake were slain names of men seven thou-"sand; and the remnant were affrighted, and "gave glory to the God of heaven. The second "woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh "quickly."

At the same period as the war of the beast with the witnesses, and their death, resurrection, and ascent into the symbolical heaven, there was a great earthquake or revolution. The reformation, and the political events which accompanied and followed it, were this great revolution, which shook the edifice of the papal power and the church of Rome to their foundations, and produced a mighty and wonderful change in the opinions of mankind, and the

state of the western empire.* During a period of more than a century and a half, Europe continued to be agitated by these events; so that, even by infidel writers, whose testimony in this respect seems worthy of particular attention, the reformation has been deemed of such vast importance as to be considered one of the greatest events in history.† In this revolution it is said, that a tenth part of the city (*i. e.* the papal city or anti-christian empire) fell. A tenth part of the city must signify one of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided, after its overthrow by the Goths and Vandals. Now of these ten original kingdoms, the one in which the papal power was completely subverted by the reformation, and which thenceforth ceased to be a part of the Romish church, was England. Germany, it is true, was partially reformed, and so was France for a time; but neither of these kingdoms fell away from the Romish jurisdiction and communion. Holland also, and Scotland, as well as Denmark and Sweden, entirely shook off the papal yoke; but then they were not properly parts of the Roman empire.‡ England, then, ap-

* With regard to the political effects of the Reformation, the able French author above quoted writes as follows: "Le systême des états "modernes en fût ébranlé jusques dans ses fondemens. Durant la "longue et doloreuse lutte qui s'ensuivit, tout prit une forme et une "assiette différente. Un nouvel ordre politique sortit de la fermen-"tation et de la confusion générale; les divers élémens qui le com-"posent, longtemps agités en sens divers, obéïssant enfin à la loi de "gravitation du monde moral, y prirent la place assignée par leur "poids respectifs, mais qui n'etait plus, pour la plupart, l'ancienne "place qu'ils avaient occupée."—Essai, &c. par C. Villers, p. 3.

† Hume's History of England, chap. xxix.

‡ On more mature consideration, it strikes me as probable, that

pears to be the tenth part of the city, which fell from the Romish jurisdiction in this earthquake. The reformation in England was completed at the same period as the war between Charles the Fifth and the league of Smalcalde. The papal power and jurisdiction were indeed abolished by act of parliament in the year 1534, sometime before the above war in Germany, and the reformation in that kingdom continued to advance with gradual steps during the whole of the reign of Henry the Eighth; but it was not completed till the accession of Edward the Sixth, in 1547, the very year when Charles defeated the remnant of the Smalcaldic league at the battle of Muhlburg.

In the earthquake, or revolution, seven thousand names of men were slain. This has been generally understood by eminent expositors, as denoting the abolition either of civil or ecclesiastical titles of distinction, or orders and offices of men: seven thousand of these are slain or destroyed, which is a mystical number, both signifying a great multitude, and also the utter and final abolition of the titles in question. And the prophecy seems to have received its accomplishment in the abolition of the monastic orders in the kingdom of England, which fell from the Romish jurisdiction in the earthquake; and likewise in such parts of Germany as embraced the reformation. Indeed, in another sense, the swarms

the whole of Great Britain, including both England and Scotland, may be intended by the *tenth part* of the city. The crowns of these two kingdoms were united before the earthquake of the reformation was over. The kingdoms were destined to be united at no remote period; and, thus united, to form the great bulwark of true religion and liberty in the world.

of ignorant and profligate monks, which abounded in every part of Europe before the reformation, might be called "*names of men*;" because, though they possessed the name, they were without the character of men, and sunk into the lowest degrees of vice and immorality. Jurieu understood the phrase, as denoting the utter destruction of the orders of monks and nuns.

The reformation was not only attended with the consequences above mentioned, but with effects of a most important nature upon the general state of religion and morals. "The remnant were af-"frighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." In the kingdom of England, which acted so conspicuous a part in the important events of that time, a great reformation took place both in religion and morals; Romish idolatry was abolished, and the worship of God established upon pure and scriptural principles. But the beneficial effects of the reformation were not confined to that part of Christendom which embraced the protestant religion. Even the popes and their clergy felt its influence: they also were affrighted, and gave unwilling glory to the God of heaven. A great reformation of manners took place in the church of Rome itself; and since the age of the reformation, the Romish clergy, and even the popes, have assumed a decorum of conduct, and decency of morals, less unbecoming the character of those who profess to be the ministers of Christ.*

* "Une portion si considérable des richesses et du crédit de Rome "en ayant disparu, le luxe excessif, les flatteurs, les parasites, dis-"parurent aussi peu-à-peu dans la même proportion. Cela donna "jour à une réforme de mœurs, à un changement de vie devenu

Though the fall of the tenth part of the city by the earthquake was, in the main, accomplished in the same period as the war of the beast with the witnesses; yet it was not till the revolution in England in 1688, the abdication of James the Second, and the accession of William the Third, that the final shock of the earthquake, occasioned by the reformation, may be considered to have taken place. England was then finally lost to Rome. The last attempt to regain her, ended in the expulsion from the throne of the papal royal family.*

The destruction of the papal power, and the reformation in the kingdom of England, were certainly events, which, from their great and important consequences—consequences which continue to operate, even with increasing energy in the present period—seem to be highly worthy of finding a place in the prophecies of the Apocalypse; as much so, to say the least, as the events that followed the dissolution of the league of Smalcalde. The church of Eng-

" tout-à-fait indispensable au clergé Romain. Celui de l'église pro-
" testante était en général pauvre, savant, et exemplaire. Tant d'yeux
" ouverts sur le contraste des deux corps faisaient une loi impérieuse
" de l'adoucir, et même de le faire disparaître."—" Il est donc très-
" vrai que cette église (l'église Romaine) s'est imposé une réforme;
" comme aussi il est vrai que cette réforme n'est qu'une suite immé-
" diate, et peut-être forcée de celle operée par Luther, lequel d'après
" cette considération doit être regardé comme le réformateur même
" du clergé catholique."—Essai, &c. par Charles Villers, p. 90, 91.
—See also Robertson's Charles V. Book xii.

* Mr. Faber, in the fifth edition of his work on the 1260 years, has adopted the interpretation of the earthquake, and the fall of the tenth part of the city, which is here given.—I take this opportunity of acknowledging my obligations to a writer, under the signature of Philo, in the Christian Observer for the year 1810, for the interpretation of this passage which I have adopted.

land has always been one of the props and bulwarks of the reformation. In the important period in which we live, she acts a conspicuous part in the great exertions now making to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer, and to make known the name of Christ both to Jews and to Gentiles, throughout the habitable world. In England also, true religion has owed much to the zeal, piety, and learning of the dissenters, who have flourished under the protection of those principles of toleration which owe their existence to the reformation.

The earthquake being over, it is immediately declared, that "the second woe is past, and behold "the third woe cometh quickly." This annunciation may be considered as a chronological mark, to distinguish the period in which the death and resurrection of the witnesses took place. The first woe, or the irruption of the Saracens, commenced about the year 612; and at whatever period its end may be supposed to have taken place, whether in the year 762, as Bishop Newton supposes, or a century or two later, a very considerable interval, not less than three or four centuries, intervened before the sounding of the second woe trumpet. This event took place about the year 1302, when I find, by consulting the Modern Universal History, that the Turks under Othman first invaded the Greek empire. They continued to be a woe or plague till the year 1697, when they were defeated by Prince Eugene in the memorable battle of Zenta. This battle was followed by the peace of Carlowitz, in the year 1698; since when the Turkish empire has been on the decline, and the Christian states have

rather been a woe to them than they to the Christians. I am of opinion, therefore, with many able interpreters, that the Turkish woe ceased in the year 1698. It is added, "Behold the third woe cometh quickly." The word "*quickly*" seems to have a relative signification in this passage; and, as we have seen, that an interval of some centuries intervened between the end of the first and the beginning of the second woe, and also that the second woe continued for a space of three hundred and ninety-six years, if the third woe happens only one hundred years after the termination of the second, then it may be said to come quickly, inasmuch as it happens after an interval much shorter than that which separated the second woe from the first. The expression, "Behold the third woe cometh quickly," may further be intended to keep our attention and expectations awake, and to mark the third woe (when it shall come), from its proximity to the second.

CHAPTER X.

THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

"And the seventh angel sounded, and there were
" great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of
" this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord
" and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and
" ever. And the four-and-twenty elders which sat
" before God on their seats, fell upon their faces,
" and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks,
" O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and
" art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy
" great power, and hast reigned. And the nations
" were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time
" of the dead that they should be judged, and that
" thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the
" prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy
" name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them
" which destroy the earth. And the temple of God
" was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his
" temple the ark of his testament; and there were
" lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an
" earthquake, and great hail." *

It is justly remarked by Mede, that "the SACRED
" KALENDAR and GREAT ALMANACK OF PROPHECY
" *consists of the four kingdoms of Daniel, which*
" *are a prophetical chronology of times, measured*
" *by the succession of four principal kingdoms,*
" *from the beginning of the captivity of Israel*
" *until the mystery of God should be finished;—*

* Rev. xi. 15—19.

"a course of time, during which the church and "nation of the Jews, together with those whom, by "occasion of their unbelief in Christ, God should "surrogate in their rooms, were to remain under "the bondage of the Gentiles, and oppression of "Gentilism. But these being once finished, 'all "the kingdoms of this world should become the "kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.'"—*(Works, book III.)*

In considering the earthquake of the sixth seal, we saw reason for concluding that earthquake or revolution to be the same with the one mentioned in the seventh trumpet. Further, it has appeared, in reviewing the contents of the tenth chapter of the Apocalypse, that the mystery of God is to be finished in the days of the seventh trumpet. It is therefore of great importance to ascertain what place the seventh trumpet occupies in the great prophetical kalendar of Daniel; and when this point shall be made clear, we shall have advanced a considerable way in determining some of the great synchronisms of prophecy. Now, from the prophecy of the four kingdoms, in the seventh chapter of Daniel, we learn that the great enemy of the church, in the latter ages, is the little horn of the fourth beast, or Roman kingdom, by which horn it is generally agreed that the papal power was symbolized. This horn, in the vision of the prophet, continued to prevail against the saints "until the Ancient of Days came, and "judgment was given to the saints of the Most "High, and the time came that the saints possessed "the kingdom." * The coming of the Ancient of

* Dan. vii. 21, 22.

Days, and the judgment which was consequent thereupon, are thus described in the same prophecy: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down," or rather, "were set;" "and the Ancient of Days did "sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the "hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne "was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning "fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from "before him: thousand thousands ministered unto "him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood "before him: the judgment was set, and the books "were opened. I beheld, then, because of the "voice of the great words which the horn spoke: "I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his "body destroyed and given to the burning flame. "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their "dominion taken away; yet their lives were pro-"longed for a season and a time. I saw in the night "visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came "with the clouds of heaven, and came to the "Ancient of Days, and they brought him near "before him; and there was given him dominion "and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, "and languages should serve him: his dominion "is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass "away, and his kingdom that which shall not be "destroyed." *

The above passage makes it manifest, that the sounding of the seventh angel in the Apocalypse takes place at the same period as the coming of the Ancient of Days in Daniel. I think no person can deny this who believes the scriptures to be divinely

* Dan. vii. 9—14.

inspired, and takes a comprehensive view of the subject. Let the following particulars, in which the two passages correspond with each other, be compared, and it will no longer remain doubtful that they both belong to one and the same period: 1*st*, At the coming of the Ancient of Days, the judgment sits to destroy the enemies of the church; and so, at the sounding of the seventh angel, it is declared that the time is come to destroy those who destroyed the earth. 2*dly*, At the coming of the Ancient of Days, the time is said to be arrived when the saints should possess the kingdom; and so at the sounding of the seventh angel, the period is declared to be come when God should give reward to his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear his name. 3*dly*, After the coming of the Ancient of Days, the Son of Man descends with the clouds of heaven, and receives a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; and so at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, it is announced, in the triumphant thanksgivings of the heavenly hosts, that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

But though it thus evidently appears, that the kingdom of God upon earth is to be established in the days of the trumpet of the seventh angel, yet we must not conceive that this is to be immediately after the commencement of the trumpet. It is plain, from its being called the third woe, that dreadful judgments are to be executed against the nations before the joyful part of the trumpet arrives. The same conclusion may be drawn from the expressions, "the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come."

It is also said, that "the time of the dead *(is come)* "to be judged." By this expression we are probably to understand, that now is come the period when the blood of the dead saints and martyrs should be avenged on those who persecuted them, and that the cup of blood should pass into the hand of their enemies.

The eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse, which we are now considering, contains only an epitome of the great events mentioned in it, and may be viewed in the light of a sort of table of contents of what is narrated at greater length in the chapters which follow: but this epitome, or table of contents, is so arranged as to contain chronological marks, which are of much use for the elucidation of the remaining parts of the Apocalyptic visions.

This chapter, therefore, being only an epitome of events more fully revealed afterwards, we are not to expect in it any detailed account either of the woful or the joyful part of the seventh trumpet. It is briefly declared, however, on the sounding of this trumpet, that "the temple of God was opened in "heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark "of his testament." The compartment of the temple, which is here opened, is, as I observed in another place,* the holy of holies; for otherwise the ark could not be seen. The opening of the holy of holies is indicative of the near approach of that glorious state of the church when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, of which state the holy of holies was a type. The opening of the temple is also of great use in determining the place of the Apoca-

* Page 106.

lyptic visions of the seven vials of wrath, which are afterwards introduced to our view, and an unanswerable argument is thence deduced that these vials all belong to the seventh trumpet: for we find, that when the vision of these vials is presented to the eyes of the apostle, he first sees the temple opened, and then the angels, having the seven vials of wrath coming out of the temple.* Now, as the temple is opened at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and not before; and as these angels come out of the temple immediately on its being opened, we may thence certainly infer that chapter xv. 5, 6. is parallel in time with xi. 19. and that the vials all belong to the seventh trumpet. The vials are evidently the constituent parts of the third and last woe, being called *the seven plagues*, to signify to us the dreadful nature of that woe, and to indicate the complete and utter destruction which will ensue to the enemies of the church from the effusion of the vials of wrath; the number *seven* being, as we have already seen, of mystical import, denoting the completeness or perfection of that to which it is attributed.

"And there were lightnings, and voices, and "thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." In the language of symbols, these things denote great political commotions, revolutions, and dreadful war. Now, seeing that these events immediately follow the sounding of the third woe trumpet, they must be a part of that woe; and as they are mentioned in the eleventh chapter, which is, as we have observed, a sort of table of contents, or epitome, of what is described afterwards, we may expect that

* Rev. xv. 5, 6.

they will again be related more fully in their proper place. But the seven vials of wrath have already been shewn to be the constituent parts of the third woe; consequently the lightnings and voices, and thunderings, the earthquake and great hail, above mentioned, must be expected to recur somewhere in the vials; and accordingly we find that the same phenomena are seen under the seventh vial, and are there related with greater minuteness than in the passage which we are considering. Therefore the inference is, that the lightnings, and voices, and the earthquake, and great hail, mentioned in the eleventh chapter, are precisely the same with those of the seventh vial, and consequently that the two passages, Rev. xi. 19. and xvi. 18—21. are synchronical, and describe the same events. The use which is to be made of this conclusion, will appear when we consider the contents of the seven vials of wrath. We may further observe, that, as the earthquake of the sixth seal has already been shewn to be the same with that of the seventh trumpet; it follows, that Rev. vi. 12—17. and xi. 19. and xvi. 18—21. all refer to the same period.*

The seventh trumpet appears to me to have sounded at the period of the French revolution, and I am inclined to think, with Mr. Faber and Mr. Bicheno, that its awful voice began on the 10th of August, 1792, when the French monarchy was overthrown; though I deem it possible that its commencement may be dated a few months earlier, when war was declared against Austria by the National assembly.

* Vitringa justly observes, that the parallelism of these three passages, is the true key for the interpretation of this mysterious book. See his Comment. p. 738.

The French revolution, in its origin, progress, and consequences, is, without dispute, the most memorable event of a political nature which is recorded in the histories of nations. The mass of human misery which it has occasioned within a short space of years; the dreadful change which it has effected in the state of the civilized world; and the awful consequences with which it is yet pregnant, and which are hidden in the womb of futurity*—combine to place it foremost in the rank of those events which have been destructive of the happiness of mankind. If, therefore, the Saracen irruption, and the Turkish invasion and conquest, be the first and second woes, the French revolution is unquestionably the third woe. It is that "great "earthquake, such as was not since men were upon "the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great."†

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5*thly*, and *lastly*, That there is every reason to suppose that the seventh trumpet began to sound at the period of the consummation of the French revolution, in the year 1792.

I shall endeavour afterwards to prove, that the termination of the great prophetical period of twelve hundred and sixty years is also to be fixed at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. But the discussion of this point may very properly be deferred, to form the subject of one or more distinct chapters of this work, as its importance is such as to render it deserving of the most deliberate consideration.*

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Upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet, it formed a part of the thanksgivings of the twenty-four elders, that the time was at length come "*for de-"stroying those which destroy the earth.*" Who these destroyers of the earth are, has not yet however been declared; but a description is given of them in the two following chapters, the twelfth and thirteenth, and it is introduced by the above vision

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of the woman and the dragon. The woman is, as all writers agree, the true spiritual church of Christ, "the Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us "all."* The church is very often in Scripture represented to us under the figure of a woman, the spouse of Christ. This woman is clothed with the sun, "to denote that her spiritual nakedness is only "clothed by the righteousness of Christ."† She stands on the moon, to denote her sublime elevation above all sublunary objects. She has a crown of twelve stars, in reference to the twelve apostles of the Lamb, who are her brightest ornaments. The woman's being with child, and travailing in birth, and paining to be delivered, describe to us, in language suited to the analogy of the symbols, the struggles of the church, in her first and purest age, for the conversion of the Gentiles, and the persecutions she then underwent. "My little children," says St. Paul to the Galatians, "of whom I travail "in birth again until Christ be formed in you."‡ Some interpreters, and among them the respectable and learned Archdeacon Woodhouse, understand the birth of the man-child brought forth by the woman, to denote the actual nativity of our Lord: but this interpretation is founded upon a very undue mixture of literal with symbolical language; and besides, as Mr. Faber excellently remarks, it is incongruous with the universal phraseology of scripture, for our Lord is invariably represented as *the husband,* never as *the son* of his church.

The woman being a mystical or allegorical personage, we must conceive in like manner of her

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man-child; and this shows, that the interpretation of Bishop Newton, who by the man-child understands Constantine the Great, cannot be supported. Mede rightly conceives that the *mystic Christ,* or Christ formed in his members, is here to be understood;* and Mr. Faber remarks, that there is a passage in Isaiah, which is almost exactly parallel to the present prediction, and which consequently may teach us how we ought to understand it. Speaking of the mystic daughter of Zion, and foretelling the restoration of the Jews, and their final establishment as a nation, Isaiah says: "Before "she travailed, she brought forth: before her pain "came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who "hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such "things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in "one day, or shall a nation be born at once? For "as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her "children."†

As the above passage of Isaiah refers, in the opinion of almost all the commentators, to the future calling and conversion of the Jews, we may justly conclude, by an argument founded on analogy, that the parallel passage in the Apocalypse, relates to the conversion of the Gentiles in the Roman empire; and though I am not sure that I can go along with Mr. Faber in all his remarks on this subject, I agree with him in the main, in thinking that the prophecy

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received its accomplishment when the empire became completely Christian in profession, by the final abolition of paganism. But I cannot admit that the man-child signifies the *Roman community*, as professing Christianity. This profession, in the great body of those who took on them the name of Christ, was not of a nature sufficiently pure or elevated, to admit of the body of the nominal converts being described under a symbol denoting their being the genuine offspring of the woman. I should rather say, that the man-child was a symbol of the whole body of true converts within the Roman empire, when that empire finally took upon itself the profession of Christianity. The birth of the child represents the origin, and infantine state of that Christian community, which on its reaching maturity is to possess the empire of the world. Of this man-child it is accordingly said, that he should rule all nations with a rod of iron, in reference to the future power which the saints are to possess over the nations, on the establishment of the kingdom of God: "when the kingdom, and dominion and "greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, "shall be given to the people of the saints of the "Most High."* The man-child, it is further said, was caught up unto God and his throne; by which we are probably to understand the complete safety and protection vouchsafed to the church of Christ in every age. "Lo I am with you alway, even to "the end of the world."† Perhaps however this part of the allegory may rather be designed to signify, that the glorious dispensation of the reign of

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the saints, was not yet to be discovered to the world, but was to remain concealed, in the purposes of the Most High, until the destined period for the manifestation of the sons of God.* Then this man-child, or the Christian community of the saints,† shall appear armed with irresistible power, even the strength of the Son of God himself, to rule the nations, and break them in pieces as a potter's vessel.

To the whole of this interpretation it may indeed be objected, that it makes both the woman and her child signify one and the same thing, namely, the Church of Christ. The answer to this is, that in allegory, it is not uncommon for the same object in different capacities, to be represented by distinct types. Thus the animal slain for sin was a symbol of the Saviour dying for our sins, while the priest who offered the sacrifice was a type of our Saviour risen from the dead, and pleading our cause before the throne of God. In like manner, in the allegory before us, the woman seems a symbol of the church in its spiritual character, and its struggles for the conversion of a lost world, while the man-child is a type of the Christian community, considered in its civil or political capacity, as destined hereafter to rule the world. The saints in heaven have this double character or office, they are kings and priests.‡

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The dragon who stood before the woman, is expressly declared to be the Devil. He has seven heads and ten horns, which are the well known emblems of the Roman beast, or fourth kingdom of Daniel, as will be seen afterwards; and Satan is here represented with these emblems, because he acted through the instrumentality of the Roman empire in all his attacks upon the woman and her offspring, and is here considered as seated or enthroned in that empire.* He has seven crowns on his heads, to signify perhaps, that from the beginning to the end of the Roman empire, all its honour and authority are in effect his.

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words, he set in motion every engine of his vast power, in order to destroy the Gentile church in its infancy. The birth of the man-child which follows, and his being caught up to the throne of God, have already been considered, though not in the exact order of the prophetical narration.

After the birth of the man-child, the woman fled into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God, where she was to be fed a thousand two hundred and threescore days. The sojourning of the woman in the wilderness, indicates her being in a state of concealment and invisibility, and also of spiritual barrenness, no longer bringing forth spiritual children. Her nourishment in the wilderness is to be like that of Israel; she is to be fed with heavenly manna—the word and ordinances of Christ. But the woman is to be no longer seen of men, and is to act no open part in the world. The period during which she is to continue in her wilderness condition is twelve hundred and sixty prophetical days, which is the same with the time, times, and half a time, or three years and a half, afterwards mentioned; and likewise the same as the forty-two months during which the Gentiles were to occupy the holy city, and the twelve hundred and sixty days of the prophesying of the witnesses.

History proves that this vision has received its accomplishment. Shortly after the conversion of the Roman empire to the profession of the faith of Christ, the visible church quite altered its appearance. As a *community*, it seemed to possess none of its former features, but became universally

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‡ Vide Faber, *in loco;* from whom this explanation is borrowed. Vitringa supposes that this figure denotes the extensive apostasy among the bishops and pastors of the church, which was occasioned by the great persecution in the reign of Diocletian,

words, he set in motion every engine of his vast power, in order to destroy the Gentile church in its infancy. The birth of the man-child which follows, and his being caught up to the throne of God, have already been considered, though not in the exact order of the prophetical narration.

After the birth of the man-child, the woman fled into the wilderness, to a place prepared of God, where she was to be fed a thousand two hundred and threescore days. The sojourning of the woman in the wilderness, indicates her being in a state of concealment and invisibility, and also of spiritual barrenness, no longer bringing forth spiritual children. Her nourishment in the wilderness is to be like that of Israel; she is to be fed with heavenly manna—the word and ordinances of Christ. But the woman is to be no longer seen of men, and is to act no open part in the world. The period during which she is to continue in her wilderness condition is twelve hundred and sixty prophetical days, which is the same with the time, times, and half a time, or three years and a half, afterwards mentioned; and likewise the same as the forty-two months during which the Gentiles were to occupy the holy city, and the twelve hundred and sixty days of the prophesying of the witnesses.

History proves that this vision has received its accomplishment. Shortly after the conversion of the Roman empire to the profession of the faith of Christ, the visible church quite altered its appearance. As a *community*, it seemed to possess none of its former features, but became universally

corrupted. True religion receded from the eyes of men, and was at length professed and practised only in secret. The change was gradual, and was not completely effected till the spiritual power of the popes had attained to some maturity. But it then was so complete that no Christian church or community could be discerned, which possessed any resemblance to that woman who was clothed with the sun, and had the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. The woman had fled into the wilderness.*

"And there was war in heaven, Michael and his "angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon "fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither "was their place found any more in heaven. And "the dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called "the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole "world: he was cast out into the earth, and his "angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud "voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, "and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and "the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our "brethren is cast down, which accused them before "our God day and night. And they overcame him "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of "their testimony; and they loved not their lives "unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, "and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters "of the earth and of the sea; for the devil is come

* "L'esprt du Christ n'etait plus reconnaissable dans la consti-"tution de l'eglise chretienne d'occident au quinzieme siècle." Villers, p. 26.

"down unto you, having great wrath, because "he knoweth that he hath but a short time."*

Two different interpretations have been given of this passage. Mede and Bishop Newton, with most of the older writers suppose, that the war of Michael and the dragon in heaven, describes the struggles between Christianity and Paganism during the three first centuries, which ended in the expulsion of Paganism from the imperial government of Rome. As a consequence of this opinion, they maintain, that the first mention made of the flight of the woman into the wilderness, in ver. 6, is in the way of prolepsis, or anticipation, and that her actual removal thither, does not take place, till after the dragon is cast out of heaven.

The second class of interpreters, among whom are Mr. Faber and the late Mr. Andrew Fuller, conceive that the war of Michael, is subsequent to the retreat of the woman, and denotes the contest between the principles of light and darkness in the Christian Church, during the prophetical period of 1260 years, and that the fall of Satan from heaven to earth, indicates the victory obtained by the true church at the Reformation.

In the former edition of this work, I adopted the last of these expositions; but having been led carefully to re-consider the subject, I have found myself obliged entirely to abandon that opinion. For upon referring to this passage, the fifth general rule of interpretation laid down in the preface,† I could

* Rev. xii. 4—12.

† The rule here alluded to is the one adopted from Mr. Frazer, and very much of the arrangement of the Apocalypse seems to hang upon a strict attention to this invaluable canon of interpretation.

not but see that the 6th verse, in which it is said that "the woman fled into the wilderness," corresponds in point of time with the 14th verse, in which we are again told, that "to the woman were given "two wings as of a great eagle, that she might fly "into her place in the wilderness."* Now as we arrive at the flight of the woman, in the last mentioned clause, after the narrative of the war in heaven, and the fall of the dragon to the earth, it may hence be deduced, that this war precedes the retreat of the woman, into her wilderness state. According to this view, the synchronisms of the first fourteen verses of the chapter, must be arranged in the manner following.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood

And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and

* Mr. Faber gets rid of the argument founded on this correspondence by placing ver. 14. in a parenthesis; but I deem this to be an unwarrantable license, tending to introduce confusion into the prophecies of this book, by depriving us of some of its great landmarks.

before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and his throne.

the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God, day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death. Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth, and the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman, which brought forth the man-child.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

The foregoing arrangement, which seems necessarily to flow, from the application of Mr. Frazer's rule, to verses 6 and 14, makes it evident, that the first six verses of the chapter, are parallel in time, with the next eight. And as it thus appears, that the war between Michael and the dragon, the

victory of Michael, and the fall of Satan, all preceded the flight of the woman, they must be referred in substance to the same events, as the gestation of the woman, namely, to the contests between Christianity and Heathenism, the triumph of the Gospel, and the final expulsion of the Pagan idolatry from the authority with which it was invested in the Roman state; and this, as already observed, is the interpretation which is given of the passage, by nearly all the older commentators.*

It is evident from the Scriptures, that the worship of the Pagans, was in effect directed to Satan and his angels. When at length, through the power of the heavenly doctrine of Christ, in bearing witness for which, the confessors of the first ages loved not their lives unto death, the abominations of Heathenism were cast down from their lofty elevation, and trampled in the very dust, it might well be said, that Satan fell from heaven to the earth; and with him his agents in the Roman empire, the heathen emperors, and priests, and philosophers, and magistrates. The heavens and they that dwell therein, that is, the members of the church triumphant, are called on to rejoice at this victory of Christ, in the same manner as in the eighteenth chapter they are

* "Et factum est inquit prælium in cœlo, &c. nempe dum pareret "mulier non postquam peperisset ut multi accipiunt. Nam certum "est ex ver. 14. bellum hoc non gestum esse ante mulieris fugam "in eremum." Mede, *in loco.*

"Hæc vera et genuina illius temporis facies est quo ecclesia partum "illum ederet masculum de quo in superiore viso vidimus.—Pro-"positum enim Spiritui S. est novo hoc emblemate nos ducere in "notitiam illius temporis de quo antecedens prophetia agit." Vitringa, *in loco.*—The interpretation of Brightman is the same in substance.

exhorted to triumph over Babylon. But it is emphatically added, "Woe unto the inhabiters of the earth "and the sea," that is, as I conceive, the carnal inhabitants of the Roman empire, "for the devil is come "unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth "that he hath but a short time." From the fall of our first parents, Satan had reigned without a rival in the kingdoms of this world. But now, he found himself cast out of his seat, in the spiritual heaven of the greatest empire of the world; he also knew, that compared with his past reign, his remaining time was short; he was therefore filled with wrath, and immediately set himself to persecute the woman.

Arianism seems to have been the first engine of the dragon for this purpose. The triumph of the church may be dated about the year 313, when the edict of Milan was issued by the emperors Constantine and Licinius.* At this period we may therefore suppose that the fall of Satan took place. Now the flames of the Arian controversy, began to be kindled, about the year 317, or 319,† and during about half a century, the church of Christ continued to be agitated and torn by this heresy. At length, in the reign of the great Theodosius, the second council of Constantinople, which was assembled in the year 381, defined in a full and determinate manner, the doctrine of the Trinity, as it has since been received, by the great body of professing Christians of every denomination. From this time, Arianism was in some degree expelled from the churches in the body of the Roman empire, and was no more

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. xx.

† Mosheim, Cent. IV. Gibbon, chap. xxi.

protected by the emperors. It afterwards, however, took refuge among the barbarians, and the catholics of Africa were exposed to long and cruel sufferings, under the Vandalic sovereigns, who reigned in that province, for about a century before its re-union to the empire, by the arms of Justinian.

The schism of the Donatists, was another of the means employed by the dragon, for the persecution of the woman, the true church. But without doubt the most powerful and successful of his weapons of warfare against her, were derived from the rapid growth of superstition and idolatry, and the increase of the spirit of ecclesiastical domination, in the professing Church. In the fifth century, these evils had made the most melancholy progress. The souls of departed Christians were invoked, their images were worshipped, their relics and bones were supposed to possess an irresistible efficacy in defeating the attempts of Satan.*

In this state of things the woman was rapidly receding from the eyes of men. Her flight (the meaning of which has been investigated above) occupied a considerable period. But when early in

* Mosheim, Cent. V. part ii.—The testimony of an enemy of Christianity may be listened to on this subject. Gibbon, in his Decline and Fall, chap. xxviii. quotes from Eunapius, a pagan writer of that age, the following indignant reflections upon the nature of the popular religion of his day; and though we may suppose that there is in them some high colouring, yet the facts themselves are indisputable. "The heads salted and pickled of those infamous male-"factors, who for the multitude of their crimes have suffered a just "and ignominious death, are the gods which the earth produces in "our days. Such are the martyrs, the supreme arbitrators of our "prayers and petitions to the Deity, whose tombs are now consecrated "as the objects of the veneration of the people."

the sixth century, a decree of the emperor Justinian was issued, whereby the Pope was formally acknowledged as head of the church of Christ, the primitive scriptural constitution, government, and discipline, entirely disappeared: and from this era is probably to be dated, the final retreat of the woman, into the place prepared for her in the wilderness.

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth waters as "a flood after the woman, that he might cause her "to be carried away of the flood. And the earth "helped the woman, and the earth opened her "mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the "dragon cast out of his mouth."*

In the Scriptures floods of water sometimes denote affliction and tribulation; thus in Psalm xxxii. 6. *Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him,* and lxix. 2, *I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me.* In other places they signify mighty nations or armies, in a state of commotion, or rushing to battle. Isaiah xvii. 12, *Woe to the multitude of many people which make a noise like the noise of the seas, and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters.* I am of opinion that in the passage now before us both these ideas are combined, and I agree with Bishop Newton in interpreting the waters vomited out of the mouth of the serpent, to denote the impetuous torrent of barbarous nations, which in the period during which the woman was retreating to the wilderness broke in upon the Roman empire. By these hosts of ene-

* Rev. xii. 15, 16.

mies, and the bitter afflictions and sufferings which accompanied their progress, Satan hoped to carry the woman away, or to destroy the Church of Christ. "Amidst these calamities the Christians were the "principal sufferers. It is true these savage nations "were much more intent upon the acquisition of "wealth and dominion, than upon the propagation "or support of the pagan superstition; nor did "their cruelty and opposition to the Christians "arise from any religious principle, or from an "enthusiastic desire to ruin the cause of Chris-"tianity: it was merely by the instigations of the "Pagans who remained yet in the empire, that "they were excited to treat with such severity and "violence the followers of Christ."*

From the sixth to the ninth centuries the Christian church suffered much from similar events. The conquest of England by the Anglo Saxons, of Italy by the Lombards, the invasion of the empire by the Saracens, and the ravages and conquests of the Danes and Normans, may be considered as the continuation of the efforts of Satan to overwhelm the church by successive torrents of symbolical waters. But all his enterprises proved abortive. "The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the "waters."—The barbarous hordes which invaded the Roman empire settled at length within its territories; they began to imbibe the principles of civilization, and with the exception of the Saracens they all embraced the Christian faith. Thus did the earth, which is a symbol of the Roman empire, help the

* Mosheim, Cent. V. p. i.

woman by receiving its barbarian invaders into its bosom, and their gradual commixtion with the ancient subjects of the empire.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and "went to make war with the remnant of her seed "which keep the commandments of God, and "have the testimony of Jesus Christ."*

The efforts of the dragon to destroy the church having proved ineffectual, we are informed in this verse, that he still continued to feel the most rancorous hatred against the woman, and he sought out with the most anxious and malignant activity the remnant of her seed, or all true Christians, whom he continued to persecute during the whole prophetical period of the woman's abode in the wilderness. In the vision which follows, we shall learn what were the means adopted by the dragon for this nefarious purpose.

* Rev. xii. 17.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEN HORNED BEAST OF THE SEA.

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw "a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads "and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, "and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. And "the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, "and his feet was as the feet of a bear, and his "mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon "gave him his power and his seat, and great autho-"rity. And I saw one of his heads, as it were "wounded to death; and his deadly wound was "healed: and all the world wondered after the "beast. And they worshipped the dragon which "gave power unto the beast, and they worshipped "the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? "Who is able to make war with him? And there "was given unto him a mouth speaking great things "and blasphemies: and power was given unto him "to continue (or practise prosperously) forty and "two months. And he opened his mouth in blas-"phemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and "his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."*

Having in the preceding chapter described the enterprises of Satan to destroy the woman and her seed, the Holy Spirit now proceeds to show us the instruments through whom Satan was to act in all his endeavours against the church, during the period

* Rev. xiii. 1—6.

of twelve hundred and sixty years. The first of these is the beast above mentioned.

It is one of the first principles which I take for granted in the discussions which occupy these pages, that the fourth beast of Daniel represents the Roman empire. This indeed is so evident a truth, that it has been acknowledged by nearly all the writers on prophecy, whether Jewish or Christian; and if the reader desire further satisfaction on the subject, I must refer him to the works of Mede and Bishop Newton.

The ten horned beast seen by the apostle John to rise out of the sea, is plainly the same with the fourth beast of Daniel, though with one important point of difference; the Apocalyptic beast not having the little horn, which forms so conspicuous a part of the beast of Daniel.* But it will be seen afterwards, that the place of this little horn is supplied in the Apocalypse by a distinct symbol, a second beast having horns like a lamb, but speaking like a dragon, which arises out of the earth.†

If then the beast with seven heads and ten horns be the same with Daniel's fourth beast, he must represent the secular Roman empire; and the ten crowns upon his horns denote, that when the apostle first saw the beast, his territories had been already divided into ten kingdoms by the invasions of the Goths and Vandals.

Before I proceed to vindicate this opinion respecting the Apocalyptic beast, I shall mention what are the sentiments of some celebrated commentators with regard to this symbol. Mede and Bishop Newton both

* Dan. vii. 7, 8. 19—26. † Rev. xiii. 11.

maintain that the beast is the secular Roman empire, though they very inconsistently suppose that his eighth head of sovereignty, which is not mentioned till the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, is the pope. This error with respect to the last head, has been very generally, though not universally, adopted by protestant commentators, and is refuted with much strength of argument by Mr. Faber.* "The "beast that arose out of the sea," says the learned Jesuit Alcaser, "evidently relates to the fourth "beast in Daniel, chap. vii."† "It is," says Dr. Cressner, "unquestionable, that the fourth beast "in Daniel is the same with the beast in the Reve-"lations, and especially in the time of the little "horn."‡—"This beast," says Daubuz, "is the "representative of the ten monarchies which arose "out of the ruins of the Roman empire."—"He "represents," according to Mr. Pyle, "the civil "powers of the Roman empire."§ "How is it (says "Vitringa) that we are backward in here discovering "the empire of mystical Babylon, or Rome Anti-"christian, the persecutor of the saints, which was to "arise out of the rubbish of the ancient Roman "empire in the west, and to show itself in ten "powerful European kingdoms uniting themselves "to Rome for the sake of religion, and becoming "subservient for a time to her superstition and "cruelty."‖

Having produced so many authorities in support

* Dissertation on Prophecies respecting the 1260 years, vol. ii. p. 197. 5th edit.

† Quoted by the author of the Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 51.

‡ Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 51. § Ibid. p. 54.

‖ Vitringa, on Rev. xiii. 1.

of this interpretation of the symbol, I shall now give one or two arguments to show that it is the true one. Daniel's prophecy of the four kingdoms extends down to that period when the Son of Man shall come with the clouds of heaven, and establish his universal kingdom on the ruins of all the preceding empires. This is evident from the seventh chapter of his prophecies. Now, this coming of the Son of Man takes place at the period when the body of the fourth beast is given to the burning flame to be consumed, *i. e.* when the Roman empire is finally destroyed.* But, in like manner, it will be found that the Apocalyptic beast is the great enemy to be destroyed, when the personal Word of God comes with his saints, at the period of the treading of the winepress of the wrath of God at Armageddon,† which is the same advent as is mentioned in the passage of Daniel already referred to. Since then the fourth beast of Daniel, and the beast in the Apocalypse, are equally destroyed at the coming of Christ with the clouds of heaven, it follows that they are one and the same; and, as the fourth beast of Daniel is the Roman empire, the Apocalyptic beast is also the Roman empire. The only way of avoiding the above conclusion would be, to suppose that two different secular beasts or empires are to be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. But as there is not the shadow of a proof for such an hypothesis in the scriptures, it seems never to have been advanced. The above argument is further confirmed by the similarity of the two beasts, for they both had ten horns, to signify the ten

* Dan. vii. 11—13. † Rev. xix. 15.

kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided after the Gothic invasions; and if one and the same power was not intended to be represented, it is not conceivable that there should be such a resemblance between them. Besides, it is plain from the Prophecies of Daniel, that the Roman empire is the last kingdom which is to rise up against the church of Christ; either then we must suppose the Apocalyptic beast to be the Roman empire, or we shall be driven to the supposition, that Daniel and St. John contradict each other, which is impossible. We must therefore arrive at the conclusion already mentioned.

After the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms by the Gothic conquests, all the conquerors embraced the religion of Rome, and submitted to her laws, and thus became intimately connected with one another, so that the different states composing the body of the empire have, down to the present period, formed a species of federal republic, like ancient Greece; which may fitly be represented by the complex symbol seen by the Apostle John.*

That the Roman empire of the west was actually divided into ten different kingdoms, has been shown by different writers on Prophecy: but as some of the kingdoms have at one time fallen, and at another, new states have started into existence, it cannot be

* The perpetual correspondence of the Latin clergy, the frequent pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, and the growing authority of the popes, cemented the union of the Christian republic, and gradually produced the similar manners and common jurisprudence which have distinguished from the rest of mankind the independent and even hostile nations of modern Europe. Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. xxxvii.

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expected that the same number should always have continued. About the period of the fall of the western empire, or shortly afterwards, the following tribes seem to have been established in its territories: 1st, the Visigoths in Gaul and Spain; 2d, the Suevi in Spain; 3d, the Heruli in Italy; 4th, the Franks in Belgium; 5th, the Burgundians in Burgundy; 6th, the Saxons in Britain; 7th, the Huns in Hungary; 8th, the Ostrogoths in Mœsia; 9th, the Lombards in Pannonia; 10th, the Vandals in Africa. These may be considered as the ten primitive horns of the beast; and though the number of kingdoms has varied from time to time, yet it has been remarked by Daubuz: "As if the number "ten had been fatal in the Roman dominions, it has "been taken notice of on particular occasions; as "about 1240, by Eberhard, Bishop of Saltzburg, "in the Diet at Ratisbon. At the time of the "reformation they were also ten."* "As the "number of kingdoms," says Mr. Whiston, "into "which the Roman empire in Europe, agreeably to "the ancient prophecies, was originally divided, "A. D. 456, was exactly ten; so is it also very "nearly returned again to the same condition, and "at present is divided into ten grand or principal "kingdoms or states."† It is remarkable, that at the present period also,‡ the number of regal governments within the limits of the western Roman empire is exactly ten. They are as follows: 1. Austria, 2. Bavaria, 3. England, 4. France, 5. Naples, 6. Netherlands, 7. Portugal, 8. Sardinia, 9. Spain, 10. Wirtemberg.

* Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 52. † Ibid. ‡ Viz. the year 1817.

I shall now proceed to consider another feature of this beast. He had seven heads.—In the seventeenth chapter, he is introduced a second time in union with the harlot Babylon the Great, and a more particular account is there given of his origin, and the meaning of the seven heads. "The beast that thou sawest, "was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bot-"tomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that "dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names "were not written in the book of life, from the "foundation of the world, when they behold the "beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here "is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads "are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. "And there are seven kings, five are fallen, and one "is, and the other is not yet come, and when he "cometh he must continue a short space. And the "beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, "and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. "And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten "kings, which have received no kingdom as yet: "but receive power as kings, one hour with the "beast. These have one mind, and shall give their "power and strength unto the beast. These shall "make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall "overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and "King of kings: and they that are with him, are "called, and chosen, and faithful."*

The seven kings, which in the above passage are designated by the seven heads of the beast, have by the general consent of interpreters been understood to signify the forms of government, under

* Rev. xvii. 8—14.

which the Roman kingdom was successively to subsist. With respect to the first six of these forms, no difference of opinion appears to obtain among writers of authority. It is agreed that the five, which in verse 10 are declared to be fallen, were, 1. kings, 2. consuls, 3. dictators, 4. decemvirs, 5. military tribunes with consular authority, and that the sixth, which was in existence at the time of the apostle, was the imperial government of the Cæsars.

There is, however, a great diversity of sentiment with respect to the seventh form of government, and likewise the eighth, which is emphatically declared to be *the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*—In the first edition of this work, I supposed the French imperial government of Napoleon Bonaparte to be the seventh form, and that the eighth was still future. I now believe that interpretation to have been totally erroneous; and after carefully considering what has been said on the subject by the best writers, I at length rest in the following, as being the true solution of the point in question. It is the same in substance, as that offered by Dr. Henry More.

I conceive the sixth head of the beast to have represented the heathen imperial government of the Cæsars, till the accession of Constantine, and the consequent establishment of Christianity, as the religion of the empire:—and that upon the defeat and dethronement of Licinius, the last of the heathen emperors, the sixth head fell to rise no more, no notice being taken of the ephemeral reign of Julian.*

* It is objected to this interpretation, that the heathen imperial and the Christian imperial powers, being one and the same in form

The seventh head appears to denote the Christian imperial power from Constantine to Augustulus,

and name, could not be signified by distinct heads. I myself was of this opinion formerly, but more mature consideration led me to abandon it. Dr. Henry More's observations on this point are well worthy of consideration. He says: "Nor is there the least ground "of any cavil against our last subdivision, which is of emperors into "*Pagan, purely Christian*, and *Pagano-Christian*, as if there were not "a cause fundamental enough of this last distribution; whereas, on "the contrary, there is such a strong opposition betwixt the two first "members thereof that one outs the other, the seventh king being "the wounder and killer of the sixth head. And forasmuch as when "a religion is made the religion of a kingdom or empire, it is in a sort "the law of that empire; it may be rationally conceived that there "is even a political difference betwixt a Christian and a Pagan "emperor. And lastly, be that how it will, it is plain to all men, "that there is a very eminent and notorious difference betwixt a "Christian and a Pagan emperor, and of more concernment to the "church of God, than any political distinction of government. And "that which most concerns his church, we may be assured God takes "most notice of, and therefore would be as likely to distinguish the "succession of supreme governors by this difference as by any.

"Nay, I think I may safely add, that it is likely that when once "the angel had come to the division of the heads, or rather kings, "into Christian and Pagano-Christian, he did wholly neglect the "consideration of the political differences of forms of government "in the empire, that notion being now impertinent to his design, and "contented himself with the distinction of them from the account of "religion only. But till this he numbered according to the distinc-"tion of political form, they all of them till now agreeing in pure "paganism. So that the sense of "*the beast that was and is not, his* "*head is the eighth king*," seems to be this: that supreme power, be "the political frame or title of it what it will, which is over the "beast revived, that is, over the empire, idolatrizing again, all that "succession, pitch upon it where you will, be it pope, be it emperor, "is looked upon as the eighth king, or last head of the beast."—More's Works, p. 586. London, 1708.

In the above quotation, by *Pagano-Christian* the reader will understand, that the state of the empire, when it relapses into idolatry under the name of Christianity, is designed. The passage is one of peculiar value, though I am not sure that I can completely acquiesce in all the observations which it contains.

in whose person the western empire was extinguished by the Heruli and Turingi. And in this event, we may recognize the infliction of the deadly wound, on one of the heads of the beast, which was seen by the apostle, as it were wounded to death.* It was, therefore, the seventh head that John beheld thus wounded, and I think, that the wound was still unhealed, when the beast rose from the sea.

On the seventh head, also grew the ten regal horns, which occupied the place of the Christian imperial power, after it had been overthrown by the Gothic arms.† The healing of the deadly wound

* Rev. xiii. 3.—In the explanation here offered of the deadly wound of one of the heads of the beast, I have the concurrence of Bishop Newton, Pyle, Gill, and others, with this difference, that they suppose the sixth head to have represented the Christian as well as the heathen emperors, and that the deadly wound was therefore inflicted on the sixth head. The seventh form is variously interpreted by them, but is most commonly referred to the Gothic kingdoms in Rome and Italy, which succeeded the Roman empire of the west. But these were among the horns, and could not therefore be the seventh head. The eighth king, or form of government, they suppose to be the papacy; but the papacy never was the temporal head of the Roman empire, and therefore this opinion is untenable. It may here be asked, why the extinction of the western empire by the Gothic conquests is alone signified by the figure of one of the heads then receiving a deadly wound, whereas all the former changes of form in the supreme government are described simply by the first five heads being fallen. The answer to this is, that when the regal was succeeded by the consular power, it was effected not by external conquest, but by internal revolution. The same remark applies to all the subsequent changes, until we arrive at the time of the Gothic irruptions, when the western empire fell by a foreign sword. This change, which was different in its nature and origin, might therefore fitly be expressed by a different symbol.

† The analogy of the four horns on Daniel's he-goat, which grew up *for*, or *under*, the great horn that was broken, Dan. viii. 8, seems

was effected at the restoration of the western empire, in the person of Charlemagne, and the revived empire of the west, together with the ten regal horns, which were to receive power with the beast, (ch. xvii. 12.) seem to have constituted the eighth king, or form of government, which was "of the "seven," or one of the seven, being in fact, the seventh, or Christian imperial head, healed of its deadly wound, and sharing its power with the ten horns, which are inseparable from the head, on which they grow, and form the constituent parts of its rule and authority. The eighth king, therefore, is a sort of complex sovereignty, consisting, not of the ten regal horns alone, nor of the emperors alone, but of the two taken together, forming one federal system, and united by a community of religion and civil polity.—It follows, therefore, that when the apostle saw the beast arise out of the sea, he was under the eighth form of government, though that form was as yet incomplete, the western empire not having been revived, till three centuries later.

The next part of the description of the beast, which demands our attention, is, his being denominated, "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, which "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, (or abyss,) "and go into perdition." The healing of the deadly wound of one of the heads of the beast, denotes as we have seen, the revival of the western empire in the person of Charlemagne; or as it may be described,

to point out, that we are to look for the ten Gothic horns of the fourth beast, upon the imperial head that was wounded to death. This to be sure is out of nature, that horns should grow from a head so wounded; but we are to recollect, that the whole circumstances of the beast are a sort of wonder, or miracle.

the *secular restoration* of the Roman empire, after it appeared to be destroyed by the irruption of the Gothic nations. In the clause we are now considering, is delineated, the *spiritual resurrection* of the heathen Roman empire in an externally Christian form, by its lapse into anti-christian idolatry, after it had for a time professed the faith of Christ in a pure form.* A *wild beast*, which is the proper signification of θηριον, is used in prophecy to denote an empire, which is constituted upon principles, opposed to those of the kingdom of God, viz. earthliness, idolatry, and persecution. Any one of these, seems sufficient to give to a kingdom, the character of a beast, but if they are all united, they form *a wild beast dreadful and terrible*, as the fourth, or Roman monarchy is described when seen by Daniel.† Such, accordingly, was that empire in its heathen state. It was earthly in its principles; it bitterly and cruelly persecuted the saints: it was universally and grossly idolatrous. But at the conversion of Constantine, the empire put off these characters and became lamb-like, protecting and cherishing the church of God. It thus ceased to be, or *was not*, το θηριον, the wild beast.

This new character was however too much above nature to continue long. After a time the empire relapsed into idolatry. Under the authority of the emperors, the ten regal horns and the popes, the adoration of the Virgin Mary and the dead saints,

* For evidence of the essential identity of the idolatry of ancient and modern Rome, see Middleton's celebrated Letter from Rome, shewing an exact conformity between Popery and Paganism: also Dr. H. More's Works, who enters at large into the subject.

† Dan. vii. 7.

and the worship of their images, were introduced in the room of the old Pagan idolatry.* By an act of the secular head of the empire the Pope was constituted head of the church, and the saints were thereby delivered into his hand. All who opposed the idolatry and tyranny of Rome were branded as heretics, and subjected to the severest penalties. Thus the empire again became an idolatrous and persecuting power; and not only re-assumed all the features of the bestial character, but far exceeded the atrocities of its heathen state, in the long continued and dreadful war which it carried on against the church of God. *The wild beast that was, and is not, and yet is,* thus became its proper designation, as being at once expressive of its past history and present character.† Dr.

* If the reader would wish to see the idolatry of the Romish and Greek church exhibited in all its naked deformity, he must look at it not as it was refined and polished by the spiritual alchymy of the Council of Trent, but as it appears in the acts of the Second Nicene Council. I might enlarge this note by some quotations, showing the sottish and brutish idolatry inculcated by that Council, but I content myself with the following expressions, which will be found in the Acts of the Council. (Sacro Sanct. Concil. Lutetiæ Parisiorum, 1671, tom. vii. p. 58.) They are taken from the Confession and Recantation of Theodosius, bishop of Ammorium, at the Council.—"Let them "who adore not the venerable images be anathema.—Let them who "dare to derogate from and blaspheme the venerable images, or call "them idols, be anathema.—Let them who teach not the whole of "the people that love Christ to adore the venerable, sacred, and "adorable images of all the saints who pleased God in their genera-"tion, be anathema.—Let the calumniators of Christians, that is, "the image-breakers, (iconoclasts) be anathema."—I should pollute my pages were I to transcribe some of the monstrous legends of miracles wrought by images, the truth of which were testified by the bishops who attended this Council. And yet, according to the Romish dogmas, this Council was infallible!!!

† In this explanation of the revival of the beast, I follow Mede,

Henry More ingeniously suggests that the above description is to be looked upon as the name of the beast, in the same way as *He that is and was and is to come,* is one of the names of God.*

From the words of Rev. xvii. 11. I think it may be inferred, that the above name of the beast, viz. that *He was and is not and yet is,* belongs to him only under his last or eighth shape, and not under any of the prior forms of political government. That name is in effect the description of his *spiritual character* in his last state, his *political form* in the same period being specially marked, as consisting of ten regal horns, with the seventh imperial head healed of its deadly wound.†

Bishop Newton, Mr. Faber, Archdeacon Woodhouse, and other interpreters of note. It differs from my former opinion, which I now abandon as erroneous.

* More's Works, p. 587.—Vitringa also says, "Esse hoc nomen "bestiæ mysticum et ænigmaticum quod ejus demonstrat natura."

† I shall here give my reasons for rejecting Mr. Faber's explanation of the two last forms of the bestial government, which he supposes to be the Patriciate of Rome, held by Pepin and Charlemagne, merging into the Carlovingian imperial dignity in the person of the last monarch.

1st. Mr. Faber supposes that the beast revived under his sixth head, and he thereby makes the sixth, seventh, and eighth kings, or forms of political government, to be all equally *the beast that was and is not, and yet is,* whereas the prophecy expressly limits that characteristic to the eighth king.

2d. Mr. Faber supposes that the sixth head continued until the fall of the eastern empire in the fifteenth century, thereby making it in its last period cotemporize with the seventh and eighth head. This is contrary to the whole analogy of the preceding part of the prophecy, for it does not appear that any of the two preceding forms of government existed at the same moment of time.

3d. Mr. Faber further imagines the ten regal horns to have grown out of the sixth head; i.e. they were, on his scheme, more nearly connected with the sixth king than with any of the others. But this

It is said of the beast at the end of the same verse that in his eighth form "he goeth into perdition." In the above double character, spiritual and secular, which conjunctly constitute the eighth form, the beast remains, until he is finally destroyed by the seven Apocalyptic vials, the consummation of which is at the battle of Armageddon. Accordingly, we find that the beast has continued to cherish the principles of antichristian idolatry even to the present period. The body of empire still adheres, at least in profession, to the abominations of the Romish Church. It still therefore is *the beast that was and is not and yet is*. So obstinate is the attachment of

is contrary to the words of the prophecy, xvii. 11, 12; from which I think it evident, that the ten kings receive power only with the eighth or last form of the bestial government.

I shall, before closing this note, give also my reasons for dissenting from those writers, (among whom is Mr. Faber) who think that the deadly wound of one of the heads refers to the beast's *ceasing to be*, or putting off the bestial character, at the conversion of Constantine; and the healing of that wound, to the lapse of the empire into Antichristianism.

1st. If the above event was the occasion of the deadly wound, then that wound was inflicted on the sixth head, or pagan imperial power. But the head that was wounded must be the one that was healed, for the rise of a new head cannot be the healing of the wound of the sixth head. Therefore, on this scheme, the empire was still under its sixth head, when it lapsed into Antichristianism in the sixth century, i. e. when it became *the beast that was and is not, and yet is*. But I have shown above that this is contrary to the words of the prophecy, which confine that name and character to the eighth form of government; and it follows, that the explanation of the deadly wound of the beast, which leads to this false consequence, is itself unsound.

2d. It seems to me exceeding improbable, that events, so remarkable as the fall of the western empire and its revival by Charlemagne, should be left out in the symbolical history of the beast. But unless they be signified by the deadly wound of one of the heads, and the healing of that wound, I cannot find that they are mentioned at all.

its reigning dynasties to these principles, that we have witnessed since the restoration of the Bourbons in France a renewal of the idolatrous vow of Lewis XV. placing that kingdom under the protection of the Virgin Mary; and in Spain we have seen the restoration of the Inquisition. With respect to the political form of the empire, it has until the present age subsisted under its healed imperial head with the ten regal horns. But at the era of the French revolution, when the seventh trumpet sounded, and when as I shall afterwards show the vials also began to be poured out, a series of dreadful political commotions took place, in the course of which the sovereign of Austria was compelled in the year 1806 formally to resign the imperial titles of Rome; and then for the first time since its origin in the person of Augustus, the title of emperor of the Romans became totally extinct. From that date till the abdication of Napoleon Bonaparte in the year 1814, the imperial power of the West, though without its titles, appears substantially to have rested in his person. Since his fall to the present moment, the ten regal horns have reigned without any superior co-existing power, which can be viewed as representing the imperial dignity. Whether the title of emperor of the Romans is to be revived before the final destruction of the empire at Armageddon, can be known only by the event. But if its revival shall take place, it will probably be only of momentary duration, and will with the empire perish for ever.

One other particular respecting the beast remains to be considered. In the thirteenth chapter he

arises out of *the sea*, but in the seventeenth chapter he is said to arise out of *the abyss*, or bottomless pit, and hence some have supposed that there are two different ascents of the beast. There seems however to be no ground for this idea. The abyss is frequently used by the Seventy as synonymous with the sea.* Now when the empire was overwhelmed with an impetuous torrent of barbarous nations, the waves of a raging sea may be said to have broken in upon and covered its territories. Out of this sea or abyss the beast rose with his ten horns crowned, when the Gothic governments assumed a settled aspect towards the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century.†

Having thus endeavoured to shew what power the beast represents, and also the import of his seven heads and ten horns, I proceed to the consideration of the other particulars which are recorded concerning him. It is said that the dragon gave him his power, and his seat or throne, and great

* Dr. Henry More cites the following passages to show this sense of the word αβυσσος; Job xxxviii. 30. xli. 23. Ps. cvi. 9. Is. lxiii. 13. Jonah ii. 6.

† I am aware that in the New Testament αβυσσος frequently signifies the invisible receptacle of departed spirits, or hades in general, or that part of hades in particular where the wicked spirits are reserved in chains unto the judgment of the great day: see Rom. x. 7. Luke viii. 31. Rev. ix. 1. xxi. 3. This abyss is situated in the central regions of the earth, and therefore is below the sea. (See Horsley's Sermon on the Descent of our Lord into Hell.) It is therefore not impossible, that in the ascent of the beast two different ideas might be combined. He might be described as arising out of the sea, in reference to his secular and political resurrection; and as ascending out of the abyss, or regions of condemned spirits, with relation to his spiritual revival, which was the scheme of Satan himself to recover his lost authority in the Roman state.

authority. In interpreting this language, we must recollect that it forms part of a description most highly symbolical or hieroglyphical; and when stript of its figures, it seems simply to denote, that the beast was the tool and instrument of the dragon, from whose machinations he derived his strength and power.

The worship which is said to be paid to the dragon and to the beast, signifies that blind and implicit obedience which the inhabitants of the Roman empire should give to his will and his laws in matters of conscience and religion. "All the world," says Bishop Newton, "in submitting thus to the religion "of the beast, did in effect submit again to the "religion of the dragon, it being the old idolatry "with only new names. The worshipping of "demons and idols is in effect the worshipping of "devils."

"And there was given to him a mouth speaking "great things and blasphemies." He styled himself the "holy Roman empire," thus assuming to himself that which, in strict propriety of language, belongs to God only. "And power was given to him to "continue," or rather, as Bishop Newton observes, "to practise, to prevail, and prosper forty-two "months, which being reduced to days, gives "twelve hundred and sixty prophetical days, the "identical time of the prophesying of the witnesses "in sackcloth, and the treading down of the holy "city by the Gentiles, and the abode of the woman "in the wilderness." It does not follow, therefore, as Bishop Newton rightly argues, that the beast is to continue to exist no longer; but he is to practise

against the saints and church of God precisely that time.

He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, by promoting idolatry and by the exercise of an antichristian authority over the consciences of men. He blasphemed the tabernacle (*i. e.* the church of God), and them that dwell in heaven, which, in the language of symbols, denotes the members of the true church, "whose names are written in "heaven,"* and who even now by faith sit together "with Christ in heavenly places."† The beast blasphemed these saints of God, by denominating them heretics and apostates.

"And it was given him to make war with the "saints, and to overcome them; and power was "given him over all kindreds and tongues and "nations." It is sufficiently evident that the Roman empire made war with the saints, and overcame them. Throughout the western empire, true Christians were, during the whole period of the twelve hundred and sixty years, exposed to persecution and death, if they dared openly to dissent from the religion of the state. All the persecutions which papal Rome stirred up against the saints were carried into execution by the secular Roman empire, or the civil powers. It was the secular power which waged war with the Albigenses and Waldenses in France, in which *a million* of men perished. It was the secular power of Spain which, under the Duke of Alva, put to death in a few years *thirty-six thousand* protestants in the Netherlands, besides *fifty thousand* which had been butchered for the same reason in the

* Luke x. 20. † Ephes. ii. 6.

reign of Charles the Fifth.* It was the secular government of France, which revoked the edict of Nantz, and extirpated or drove into cruel exile the protestants of that kingdom. It was the secular power of the empire which slew the witnesses. Power was given to the beast over all the nations and kindreds and tongues of the Roman earth; he reigned over them with absolute authority, either through his last head or his ten horns.†

We are next informed that "all that dwell on the "earth shall worship him, whose names are not writ-"ten in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the "foundation of the world." To worship a creature of any kind, in the language of the New Testament, means the placing our hearts and affections upon it, more than upon God; and to worship the beast, therefore signifies the placing an implicit faith on his dictates in spiritual matters, and obeying them rather than the law of God.

"If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that "leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: he "that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the "sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the "saints."

The emphatic and solemn warning which is given at the beginning of this clause, "*If any man have* "*an ear, let him ear,*" has relation to what is

* This fact, of 50,000 Protestants having been murdered in the Netherlands in the reign of Charles V, I have taken from Fra Paolo Sarpi. But at the moment when these pages are sent to the press, I have not access to his work to cite the particular place where the circumstance is related. For the authorities on which I mention the other facts, see p. 14.

† Faber, *in loco.*

declared afterwards, that the vengeance of God shall at length overtake this monster, and that he shall go into captivity and perish by the sword, thus coming to an awful end, according to the just law of retaliation. This is to be effected by the seven vials of wrath, the consummation of which will be when the Almighty Word of God shall tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God in the awful day of Armageddon. What is added respecting the faith and patience of the saints, seems to be immediately connected with the preceding clause which declares the manner of the destruction of the beast; and perhaps it is intended to signify, that though the hour of the destruction of the beast will be a time of great triumph to the church of God, yet it will likewise be a season of trial to the faithful, when their faith and patience will in a very particular manner be called into exercise, so as to distinguish those who are true saints from mere professors. In confirmation of which idea, we shall meet with a similar clause in the following chapter of the Apocalypse, relating, as I shall endeavour to show, to the same period; and it may also be observed, that the solemn warning of our Lord himself, immediately before his coming at the great day of Armageddon, "Behold I come "as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and "keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and "they see his shame," seems to imply that this awful time shall be one of a peculiarly trying nature to true Christians.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TWO-HORNED BEAST OF THE EARTH, AND THE IMAGE.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of "the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and "he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the "power of the first beast before him, and causeth "the earth, and them which dwell therein, to "worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was "healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he "maketh fire to come down from heaven on the "earth in the sight of men; and deceiveth them "that dwell on the earth, by the means of those "miracles which he had power to do in the sight of "the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, "That they should make an image to the beast "which had the wound by a sword, and did live. "And he had power to give life unto the image of "the beast, that the image of the beast should both "speak and cause, that as many as would not worship "the image of the beast should be killed. And he "caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, "free and bond, to receive a mark in their right "hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man "might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or "the name of the beast, or the number of his "name. Here is wisdom, let him that hath under-"standing count the number of the beast; for it is "the number of a man, and his number is six hun-"dred threescore and six."*

* Rev. xiii. 11.

The second beast, coming up out of the earth, is evidently an ecclesiastical character, and he is the same personage as is afterwards called the false prophet. His lamb-like horns show that he assumes the appearance of a minister of the Lamb of God; but his speech, like a dragon, discovers him in reality to be a minister of the old serpent. This beast, as Mede and Mr. Faber rightly judge, is the papacy, i. e. the pope and his clergy. This opinion may be confirmed by many other authorities. "The "*former* beast," says Dr. Wall, "represents the "secular power of the Roman empire (as it was "now in the ten horns), and this the pontifical." —"The second beast," says Dr. Cressener, is "a succession of ecclesiastical persons having the "supreme power in ecclesiastical affairs." *

The first beast arises out of the sea, *i. e.* out of the multitude of the nations of the Roman world in a state of tumult and confusion; for this is sometimes the symbolical signification of the sea. But the second beast grows up (as it were) silently out of the earth, by degrees and unheeded.

The second beast exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him; by which is intended, not the political authority, though that was often also wielded by priests, but the power which the first beast had to make war with, and overcome the saints. This power was in fact exercised by the papacy before, or in presence of the secular powers of the Roman empire, *i. e.* by permission of the several princes, in their dominions, and with their authority. Accordingly we are informed by history, that the papal

* Quoted by the author of Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 66.

power was the chief instigator of the persecutions of the faithful disciples of Christ within the limits of the Roman empire, during the twelve hundred and sixty years.

He causeth the earth to worship the first beast, by giving his support to the tyrannical power of the beast in matters of conscience. History shows that the support of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities to each other during the reign of the papal power was mutual; and in fact, Charlemagne, who in his own person revived the empire of the west, was crowned by the pope, who had a great share, and acted a conspicuous part, in that remarkable transaction, thus causing the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

"He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire "to come down from heaven on the earth," &c. In interpreting the language of this mystical book, we ought never to lose sight of its highly symbolical nature. Fire, in this passage, may denote the fire of persecution, which the pope and his clergy caused to come down from the symbolical heaven, or the civil government, to destroy their enemies, all who disputed their authority.* There may, however,

* Pope Adrian VI. who succeeded to the Pontificate in the year 1522, while the Reformation was yet in its infancy, was desirous, in order to deprive the Protestants of the powerful arguments which they derived from the corruption of the church, to introduce some reform in the Romish court. On this occasion, many reasons were offered by his counsellors to dissuade him from such an attempt. Cardinal Francis Soderini, bishop of Preneste, made use of the following arguments, which I quote from Paolo Sarpi, the Catholic writer already mentioned: "Il lui dit nettement qu'il n'y avoit nulle "esperance de confondre ni de dissiper les Lutheriens par la reforma-

not improbably be a reference to the false miracles and lying wonders of the popish clergy.

We are next informed that the second beast deceived the inhabitants of the earth, by means of the miracles or wonders which he had power to do in the presence of the first beast, saying to them, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound of the sword, and did live. In this highly hieroglyphical language is depicted to us the entire degeneracy of the visible professing church, once so fair and lovely; but which, by listening to the false doctrines of the pope and his clergy, lost every feature of its original beauty, as the chaste spouse of Christ: and was so utterly corrupted as to become transformed into an image or representation of the beast, having in it all the distinguishing features of the bestial character—idolatry, blasphemy, and persecution.*

The pope himself and his clergy could not form the image of the beast, because a church consists of clergy and people, and cannot exist without

" tion de la Cour de Rome. Que c'etoit au contraire le vrai moyen " de leur donner plus de credit," &c. And again, " Que les heresies ne " s'etoient jamais dissipées par les reformations mais par les Croisades " et en excitant les princes et les peuples à les detruire: que " c'etoit par ce moyen qu' Innocent III, avoit heureusement etouffé " celle des Albigeois en Languedoc, et que ses successeurs n'en " avoient point employé d'autres contre les Vaudois les Picards, " les Pauvres de Lyon," &c.

* " Ainsi l'esprit si pur et si sublime du christianisme, à qui ne " convenait qu'une forme aussi pur et aussi simple que lui, fut suc- " cessivement étouffé pendant une longue suite de siècles jusqu'au " seizième, par une continuelle surcharge d'élémens étrangers qui " avaient dénaturé son action, et en avaient peu-à-peu fait un corps " informe, d'où sortaient tous les maux que les erreurs et les passions " peuvent produire."—Villers, Essai, p. 22. See also Ibid. p. 2.

both. Hence it was necessary that this lamb-like beast should persuade the people to concur with him in forming or constituting the corrupt church or image of the beast. If they had not given ear to his false doctrines, the image had not been formed; but they listened to him, and were deceived, and the image was made.

The pope and his clergy had power to give life to the image of the beast, *i. e.* political life and authority; and let history say whether the church did not obtain political life and power by means of the popes: "That the image of the beast should both "speak, and cause that as many as would not wor-"ship the image of the beast should be killed." The church or image spake by its mouths, the general councils and other ecclesiastical assemblies. It did not itself by its own authority put men to death, but it delivered them up to the secular power to be put to death, thus causing them to be killed. The proceedings of the council of Constance with respect to John Huss are a very remarkable illustration of this passage; after he was degraded by the council, and his soul committed to the devil, his sentence was thus pronounced: "*The holy synod of Con-"stance declares that John Huss ought to be given "up to the secular power, and does accordingly so "give him up, considering that the church of God "has no more to do with him.*"*

The image is not only an image *of the beast*, containing in itself all the features of the bestial character, but it is also an image *to the beast*, i. e. the object of the idolatrous veneration of the secular

* Milner's History of the Church of Christ, Cent. XV. chap. ii.

Roman empire. Accordingly the corrupt abominable church was styled by the secular powers our Holy Mother the Church. She obtained almost a paramount influence over the minds of princes, and was the object of their superstitious esteem and veneration.

If the above explanation of the Apocalyptic image be the true one, then the image is a symbol of the same corrupt church afterwards exhibited to us as a woman, the harlot Babylon the Great; in confirmation of which idea, it will be found that wherever the image is subsequently mentioned, there Babylon is not mentioned; and on the contrary, wherever mention of Babylon is made, there the image is omitted.

As the people of the Roman empire concurred with the people and clergy in forming the image, we find it said, in like manner of Babylon, that she sitteth on many waters, by which are meant peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*

But it may be asked, why, if the image be the same as Babylon, two different symbols are employed by the Holy Spirit to denote the same thing? I would observe, in answer to this question, that it hath seemed good to the Spirit of God on every occasion to adhere to what may be called the proprieties of the symbolical style, and not to violate natural probabilities in the language of prophecy. In the thirteenth chapter an account is intended to be given, in symbolical language, of the share which both the clergy and people respectively had in corrupting the visible church of Christ. Now it

* Rev. xvii. 15.

would have been a violation of natural probability, and all the proprieties of the prophetical style, if it had been said that the second beast persuaded the inhabitants of the earth, that they should make or form *a woman*, because such an exertion of power is physically impossible. It would be an act of creation. The formation of the corrupt church is therefore with admirable propriety signified by the symbolical act of making *an image*.

On the other hand, when the destruction of the corrupt church is intended to be shown forth, in order to display to us all her abominations, she is introduced in the form of a bloody and abominable harlot, riding on a blasphemous wild beast. Each of the symbols, in its own place, is the fittest that could have been selected.

I have not met with the above interpretation of the image in any author whose works I have consulted. I hope therefore that it will be thoroughly sifted, and that it may stand or fall on its own merits. I have never seen any other solution of this Apocalyptical enigma which satisfied my mind, or I had not sought a new one. The following passage, however, which I have met with in a literary journal, confirms, or at least illustrates, my idea, of the Apocalyptical image in a very remarkable manner; and the more so, as the Reviewer was not at the time considering a work on prophecy: "We cannot but think," says the Reviewer, "that the spirit of popery is in a "degree to be discovered in what may be called the "high church party of every establishment, though "we grudge any men a title which seems to imply a "stronger attachment to the church than we glory

"in professing. Popery is the offspring, not of "young dissent, but of old establishments; not of "a poor but a rich, not of an illiterate but a fastidious, "not of a zealous but a worldly body. It was the "ambitious scheme of a secular priesthood to grasp "the sceptre of the world. Its doctrines, its gor-"geous rites, its penances and miracles, were all "a sort of machinery, by which men were either to "be drawn or forced into the power of the priests. "THE VISIBLE CHURCH WAS THE GREAT IMAGE TO BE "WORSHIPPED; the form was to be considered as of "a paramount and almost exclusive importance. "The Bible was to be locked up; the people to be "kept in profound ignorance; for all these could "readily be shaped into a ladder of steps, by which "the pope could mount to the throne of Chris-"tendom."*

* Review of Butler's Installation Sermon, British Review for 1812, p. 103.—The Reviewer of this volume in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, having expressed a suspicion of the solidity of my interpretation of the image, I think it due to that respectable work to make some remarks upon its reasoning on this point. The Reviewer's objection seems to me to be founded on a misconception, whereby he confounds two things which are carefully to be distinguished from each other; viz. the government or ruling power of the church, and the church itself. The second beast represents the first of these objects, or the ruling power in the church, i. e. the pope and his clergy. The image is on the contrary a symbol of the whole church, including both clergy and people. To illustrate this I will suppose that the general assembly or convocation of any particular Protestant Church were changed into a permanent body, and that they were to lapse into idolatry. The Reviewer will grant that the assembly in that case would become a tyrannical idolatrous power, which might fitly be symbolized by a beast. But it does not necessarily follow that they would be successful in drawing the body of the church which they represented into the guilt of their apostasy. That church might resist all their power and solicitations, and as a body remain true to

Having given the above account of the image, the Apostle John further informs us, that the second beast caused all men to receive a mark on their right hand or their forehead, and that no man might buy or sell (*i. e.* exercise the common offices of civil life), unless he had the mark or name of the beast, or the number of his name. The number of the beast is also declared to be six hundred and sixty-six, and it is said to be the number of a man.

The language of this clause is equally figurative with that of the preceding parts of the chapter; and when stript of its figures, it seems to imply,

the protestant cause. Now to apply this reasoning to the Western Church in general: history informs us that the Popes were opposed by many of the churches in their wicked attempts to introduce the worship of images. In the eighth century the council of Frankfort which was attended by three hundred bishops of various nations, condemned equally the second council of Nice, and the worship of images. The British churches followed the same line of conduct. Had this resistance not been overcome by the Popes, the visible church within the western empire never would have been transformed into an image of the beast: but at length the popes overpowered the efforts of the friends of truth. Idolatry was universally introduced, and thenceforth the church, as a whole, was marked by all the features of the character of the first beast, secularity, blasphemy, idolatry, and persecution, and became therefore an image of the beast. The Reviewer's idea, that the image was a symbol of the temporal power of the popes, appears to me untenable for the following among other reasons. The temporal power of the papacy was often and most strenuously resisted even by Catholic princes, and the popes had no authority to kill those who *thus* resisted them. The authority of the image on the contrary was universal, so that whosoever would not worship the image was killed. This seems to me to have been fulfilled in the power of the corrupt church and nothing else, for whatever differences and quarrels arose among Catholic princes on other points, they all agreed in bowing with implicit submission to the authority of the church in spiritual matters.

that so great was the spiritual tyranny exercised by the ecclesiastical beast, that he would permit no person who did not give the most unlimited and unreserved obedience to the beast, to exercise the common offices of society. "That which does best "open the mystery of these expressions," says Dr. "Cressener, "is the observation of Grotius upon "this place, that it was a common fashion in St. "John's time, for every heathen god to have a parti-"cular society or fraternity belonging to him; and "the way of admitting any into these fraternities "was, 1*st*, by giving him some hieroglyphic mark "in their *hands* or *foreheads*, which was accounted "sacred to that particular god; as that of an ivy "leaf, to own themselves of the fraternity of Bac-"chus: 2*d*, by sealing them with *the letters of the* "*name* of that god: and, 3*d*, With that *number* "which the Greek letters of their name did make "up; for the numeral ciphers of the Greeks were "the letters of the alphabet."*

In confirmation of the above remarks, it may be observed, that in this mystical book, to be sealed with the seal of the living God, to have his name written on the forehead, is the distinctive badge of his servants.† Therefore, to have the name of the beast, or his mark, or the number of his name, inscribed on the forehead or right hand, is the badge of the votaries of the beast.

With regard to the number of the beast, I adopt without hesitation the explanation first given of it

* Quoted in the Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 73.
† Rev. iii. 12; vii. 2; xiv. 1.

by Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, that it is contained in the name Latinus, as expressed in Greek characters.

Λ - - - -	30
Α - - - -	1
Τ - - - -	300
Ε - - - -	5
Ι - - - -	10
Ν - - - -	50
Ο - - - -	70
Σ - - - -	200
	666

The observations of Mr. Faber on this point seem to me peculiarly valuable. The ten-horned beast is, as Mr. Faber observes, the secular Roman empire, and of this empire the first real or fictitious founder was *Latinus*. Hence the Romans were called *Genus Latinum*. Their language is *the Latin*. The revived western empire and the western church, to distinguish them from the Greek empire and church, have always been called *the Latin* empire and church; the service of the Romish church is also *in Latin;* the scriptures themselves are read *in the Latin;* all the official papers of the church are *in Latin:* "On these grounds then we "have abundant reason to conclude, that Latinus, "and nothing but Latinus, is the name of the beast; "for in no other word descriptive of the revived "temporal beast, or the papal Roman empire, can "such a fatal concurrence of circumstances be "discovered."*

Having thus ascertained the number of the beast,

* Faber's Dissert. vol. ii. p. 347; 4th edition.

it only remains to observe, that we learn from the history of Christian Europe in what manner this part of the prophecy was accomplished. During those ages when the papal power was at its height, all who refused to hold communion with the corrupt Latin church, and thus to inscribe themselves with the mark, and name, and number of the beast, were exposed to excommunication as heretics, to exclusion from the common charities and offices of life, and the loss of life itself. I shall conclude what I have to offer on this head, by quoting a passage from Bishop Newton, shewing the literal fulfilment of this part of the prophecy: "If any dissent from the "stated and authorized forms of the Latin church, "they are condemned and excommunicated as "heretics; and in consequence of that, they are no "longer suffered to buy or sell; they are interdicted "from traffic and commerce, and all the benefits "of civil society. So Roger Hoveden relates of "William the Conqueror, that he was so dutiful to "the pope, that he would not permit any one in his "power to buy or sell any thing, whom he found "disobedient to the apostolic see. So the canon of "the Council of Lateran, under Pope Alexander "the Third, made against the Waldenses and "Albigenses, enjoins, upon pain of anathema, that "no man presume to entertain or cherish them in "his house, or land, or exercise traffic with them. "The synod of Tours, in France, under *the same* "*pope*, orders, under the like intermination, that no "man should presume to receive or assist them, no "not so much as to hold any communion with them "in buying or selling; that being deprived of the

"comfort of humanity, they may be compelled to "repent of the error of their ways. Pope Martin "the Fifth, in his bull, set out after the Council of "Constance, commands in like manner, that they "permit not the heretics to have houses in their dis-"tricts, or enter into contracts, or carry on commerce, "or enjoy the comforts of humanity with Christians."*

* The charge of idolatry which is made by protestants against the church of Rome, may be easily substantiated, not only from the practice of that church in the dark ages, but from its authorized and avowed standards in the present day. I refer to the liturgy of that church, edited by the Rev. Peter Gandolphy, and printed by Keating, Brown, and Keating, in 1812, and which is presumptuously entitled, "LITURGY, OR A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYERS, AND ADMINISTRATION "OF SACRAMENTS, WITH OTHER RITES AND CEREMONIES OF THE "CHURCH, FOR THE USE OF ALL CHRISTIANS IN THE UNITED "KINGDOM;" by which it is plainly insinuated, that all the protestants of the United Kingdom who reject this Liturgy, are not Christians. In this Liturgy the old idolatry of the church of Rome, in adoring the consecrated wafer and cup in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is still retained, as appears by the following words, taken from the Directory of the Mass: "*After pronouncing the words of consecra-"tion, the priest kneeling adores and elevates the sacred host,*" (*or consecrated bread*) "*and the bell at the altar is rung to give notice to "the congregation.*" In like manner it is said, after the consecration of the cup, "*Here also kneeling he adores and elevates the chalice*" *or cup.*

The following words are taken from the Litany in honour of the blessed Virgin Mary, commonly called the Litany of Loretto. We should scarcely believe it possible, that such matter should be published in this enlightened country, in the nineteenth century, as a form of Christian worship! But as it has been printed, it is fit to make it generally known, in order that all men may see that the Romish *Church* obstinately cleaves to its abominations.

"We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God! despise not our "petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever-"glorious and blessed Virgin!

Holy Mary,	Pray for us,	Mother of divine grace,
Holy mother of God,		Mother most pure,
Holy Virgin of Virgins,		Mother most chaste,
Mother of Christ,		Mother undefiled,

Mother untouched,	Pray for us,	Tower of David,
Mother most amiable,		Tower of ivory,
Mother most admirable,		House of gold,
Mother of our Creator,		Ark of the covenant,
Mother of our Redeemer,		Gate of heaven,
Virgin most prudent,		Morning Star
Virgin most renowned,		Health of the weak,
Virgin most powerful,		Refuge of sinners,
Virgin most merciful		Comforter of the afflicted,
Virgin most faithful,		Help of Christians,
Mirror of justice,		Queen of angels,
Seat of wisdom,		Queen of prophets,
Cause of our joy,		Queen of apostles,
Spiritual vessel,		Queen of martyrs,
Vessel of honour,		Queen of confessors,
Vessel of singular devotion,		Queen of virgins,
Mystical rose,		Queen of all saints.

"We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God! despise not our "petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O ever-"glorious and blessed Virgin!

"Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God!

"That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ."

In order to hide from the people the guilt and danger of bowing down to images, the Romish priesthood have, in some of their catechisms, as in that of the Rev. Dr. James Butler, revised, enlarged, approved, and recommended by the four Romish Archbishops of Ireland, wholly omitted the second commandment; and they endeavour to conceal this daring corruption of the divine law, by dividing the tenth commandment into two. In other catechisms, published for the use of the English Roman Catholics, the second commandment is indeed inserted; but it is blended with the first; and the tenth is divided into two, in the same manner as in the Irish catechisms. But though in the catechisms last mentioned, the second commandment is inserted as a subordinate part of the first, yet the Hebrew phrase, לא תשתחוה להם "*Thou shalt not bow down* "*thyself to them*," which absolutely forbids every kind and degree of religious veneration to images, has in the Romish catechisms been thus translated, "*Thou shalt not adore them;*" and the framers of these catechisms presumptuously varnish over their open violation of the above prohibition in the following manner:

Q. "Is it lawful to honour the images of Christ and his saints?

A. "Yes, if rightly understood; because the honour given them is

" referred to the things they represent: so that by the images or " crosses *which we kiss, and before which we kneel*, we honour and " adore Christ himself.

Q. " Do catholics pray to images?

A. " No, by no means: we pray before them indeed, to keep us " from distraction, but not to them; for we know they can neither " see, nor hear, nor help us.

Q. " What benefit have we then by them?

A. " They movingly represent to us the mysteries of our Saviour's " passion, and the martyrdom of his saints."—See *Abstract of the Douay Catechism.*

Had the above Hebrew phrase been literally rendered, " *thou shalt* " *not bow down thyself to them*," the Romish priests could not thus have varnished over the violation of the commandment. But they first deceive the people by a translation of the passage not sufficiently literal, and then they pretend, that in honouring, kissing, and kneeling before the images, they do not *adore them*, though in fact they *bow down* to them, and thus disobey the letter of the divine law.

There are without doubt many excellent persons who adhere to the communion of the church of Rome, from the prejudices of education; but it becomes all such persons to examine the scriptures for themselves, and not to put confidence in their priests: for if the Bible be the word of God, idolatry is a sin of a most heinous nature, and in those who have the scriptures in their hands it is inexcusable.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE PROPHETICAL PERIOD OF TWELVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY YEARS—GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE SUBJECT—SIX SCRIPTURAL PROPOSITIONS LAID DOWN.

In considering the 11th, 12th, and 13th chapters of the Apocalypse, we have seen frequent mention of a certain mysterious period, during which the enemies of the church were to triumph over her. This period is also twice mentioned in the book of Daniel, and it occurs five times in the Apocalypse. I shall recapitulate the different passages, for the sake of perspicuity.

1*st*, In Dan. vii. 25, we are informed that the saints, and times, and laws, are to be given into the hand of the little horn of the fourth beast, *until a time, and times, and the dividing of time*, i. e. three years and a half.

2*d*, In Dan. xii. 7. mention is again made of the same period, *a time, times, and a half*, as measuring the duration of certain events previously predicted.

3*d*, In Rev. xi. 2, it is said that the Gentiles are to tread under foot the holy city *forty and two months.*

4*th*, In xi. 3, we are told that the witnesses are to prophesy *a thousand two hundred and threescore days*, clothed in sackcloth.

5*th*, In xii. 6, it is said that the woman, the church, shall be fed *one thousand two hundred and threescore days* in the wilderness.

6*th*, In xii. 14, we learn that the woman is to be nourished in her place in the wilderness, *a time,*

and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

7th, In xiii. 5, power is said to have been given to the beast, to practise prosperously *forty and two months.*

Besides these seven places of scripture, in which express mention is made of the above prophetical period, there is an allusion to it in two others. Our Lord; in Luke xxi. 24, 25, informs us, that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Now it is the opinion of Mede, Horsley, and other eminent interpreters, that these times of the Gentiles are the latter period of the Gentile monarchies; and more particularly the time, times, and dividing of time of Daniel, at the end of which the awful convulsions of the nations are to commence, which shall immediately precede the conversion and restoration of Israel.

Again, in Rev. x. 5—7. the angel lifts up his hand and swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, *that there should be time no longer,* but the mystery of God shall be finished when the seventh angel begins to sound. Mede understands the time here mentioned to be the time, times, and half a time of Daniel; and that these are to be finished at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.*

It may not however be obvious to every person, that a time, times, and half a time, and forty-two months, and twelve hundred and sixty days, are different forms of expressing one and the same number;

* Mede's Works, Book iv. epist. 8.

it is proper therefore to make this plain. *A time,* in the style of prophecy, means a year. *A time, and times, and half a time,* are one year, two years, and half a year, or three years and a half. But the ordinary Jewish year, without intercalary days, consisted of three hundred and sixty days; therefore three years and a half make exactly twelve hundred and sixty days. In like manner, the Jewish month consisted of thirty days; and forty-two such months contain twelve hundred and sixty days. Thus it appears, that all of the above numbers, when reduced to their integral parts, make one and the same number of twelve hundred and sixty days.

Protestant writers on prophecy are almost universally agreed in opinion, that these days stand for years, and that the real prophetical period signified by them is twelve hundred and sixty years. The following reasons may be offered in support of this interpretation.

1*st,* We learn from the scriptures that days are frequently taken to denote years. It is said in Numbers xiv. 33, "Your children shall wander in the "wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, "until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. "After the number of the days in which ye searched "the land, even forty days, each day for a year, "shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years." A similar example of days being put for years, occurs in the Prophecies of Ezekiel.* In the famous prophecy of the seventy weeks in Daniel, the seventy weeks mean weeks of years, according to the una-

* Ezek. iv. 4—6.

nimous testimony of interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, who unite in understanding the period revealed to be four hundred and ninety years.

2d, The events which were to take place during the twelve hundred and sixty days, are of too extensive and complicated a nature to be accomplished within the term of twelve hundred and sixty natural days, or three years and a half.*

3d, It is proved by the event, that the twelve hundred and sixty days are not natural days, for the powers whose duration was to be measured by that period, and the depressed state of the church which was to continue during the twelve hundred and sixty days, have in fact existed more than one thousand years, from whatever time we may calculate the rise of these powers, or the depressed condition of the church.

Considering, therefore, that it is established by the above arguments, founded on the nature of things, and the analogies of scripture, and confirmed by the consent of every protestant commentator of note, that the twelve hundred and sixty days mean the same number of years; I remark, in the next place, that the scriptures evidently attach a very great and solemn degree of importance to this prophetical period. We may draw this inference from its being directly mentioned no less than seven times, and alluded to in other places; and likewise from the reverential and awful manner in which the second annunciation of these times is given in Dan. xii. 7. A careful inquiry into the period of the commence-

* See Faber's Dissert. on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 6. 4th edition; where this point is argued at considerable length.

ment and termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years, is therefore very necessary for the elucidation of the Prophecies of Daniel and St. John.

In proceeding into this inquiry, I shall endeavour to show, first, what are the internal scriptural marks of the commencement and end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, and shall next compare historical facts with these marks; thus endeavouring, in the method of inductive reasoning, to ascertain the true era of the above period. In this way we may hope to arrive at a certain conclusion respecting this most interesting and important subject of inquiry. It will greatly facilitate what I have in view, if the different scriptural marks be stated in the form of propositions. This therefore is the method I shall adopt.

PROPOSITION FIRST.

The commencement of the twelve hundred and sixty years is to be marked by the giving the saints, and times, and laws (of the church), into the hand of the little horn.

For the proof of this proposition I refer to Dan. vii. 25.

PROPOSITION SECOND.

At the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years, the Ancient of Days comes, and the judgment sits, to take away the dominion of the little horn, and to consume and destroy it unto the end.

Therefore, when the judgment begins to sit, then the twelve hundred and sixty days are ended.

I rest the proof of this proposition on Dan. vii. 26, compared with the 9th, 10th, and 22d verses.

PROPOSITION THIRD.

The witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth during the whole twelve hundred and sixty years. Therefore, when they put off their sackcloth, the twelve hundred and sixty years are ended.

The truth of this proposition is evident from Rev. xi. 3.

PROPOSITION FOURTH.

The mystical woman, the church, is to be concealed in the wilderness during the whole period of the twelve hundred and sixty years. Therefore, when the woman begins to emerge from the wilderness, that period is elapsed.

The proof of this proposition is in Rev. xii. 6. and 14.

PROPOSITION FIFTH.

The twelve hundred and sixty years end at the sounding of the seventh Apocalyptic trumpet.

I prove this by Rev. x. 6, 7, wherein the angel swears, in the awful name of him that liveth for ever and ever, that when the seventh angel, shall sound, time shall be no longer. This signifies (as Mede justly argues) that when the seventh angel shall sound, then the mysterious times of Daniel (*i. e.* the twelve hundred and sixty years) shall end. This interpretation of the passage is shown by the context to be the true one; for it is added, that at the same period the mystery of God shall be finished; which cannot be till the twelve hundred and sixty years of spiritual darkness and tyranny are ended.

The same thing is further proved by the triumphant language of the elders on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Rev. xi. 15—18. This language is utterly inconsistent with the idea of the church still remaining under her enemies, and in the wilderness, which must be her condition if the twelve hundred and sixty years do not expire at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

From the last proposition, the following inference may be drawn: It has already been proved, in proposition second, that the twelve hundred and sixty years end when the Ancient of Days comes, and the judgment in Daniel vii. 9, 10. begins to sit; and we have now seen that the same prophetical period elapses at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Therefore, as the sitting of the judgment at the coming of the Ancient of Days, and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, both synchronize with the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years, they also synchronize with each other. This confirms the reasoning contained in a former part of this work, whereby we arrived at the same conclusion.*

PROPOSITION SIXTH.

The times of the Gentiles (i. e. the twelve hundred and sixty years) terminate when the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and distress of nations, mentioned by our Lord, begin.

This proposition is founded upon Luke xxi. 25. compared with the context.†

* Page 131, 132.

† "When St. Luke's times of the Gentiles are finished, then shall "be signs in the sun and moon: the Son of man comes also in the

But it has already been shown, in considering the sixth seal, that the phenomena in the symbolical heavens, mentioned in Luke xxi. 25, and the corresponding passages of Matthew and Mark, are the same with the earthquake of the sixth seal;* and the earthquake of the sixth seal is, as I have endeavoured to prove, the same with that of the seventh trumpet. Therefore it follows, that the times of the Gentiles, or twelve hundred and sixty years, expire also at the commencement of the earthquake of the sixth seal, and the earthquake of the seventh trumpet, which further confirms the truth of the fifth proposition.

Having thus laid down a series of scriptural propositions respecting the commencement and end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, I shall now go on to compare these propositions with history.

PROPOSITION FIRST.

The commencement of the twelve hundred and sixty years is to be marked by the giving of the saints, and times, and laws, into the hand of the little horn.

That the little horn is the papacy, has been established with such force of evidence by Mede, Bishop Newton, Mr. Faber, and other writers on prophecy, that I do not consider it as at all necessary to enter

"clouds of heaven; the redemption of Israel, and the kingdom of "God, are at hand." Mede's Works, Book iv. epist. 8.—„ The "copulative καὶ, verse 25, is to be taken after the Hebrew manner; "*ordinativè* for *tum*, *deinde*, which you know is frequent in the "scriptures. "*Then* shall be signs," &c." Ibid. Book iv. ep. 12.

* Pages 21, 22.

upon the proof of it.* The papacy being a spiritual power within the limits of the Roman empire, Mr. Faber argues, I think rightly, when he says that the giving the saints into the hand of the papacy, must be by some formal act of the secular power of that empire constituting the pope to be the head of the church. It is not, in fact, easy to conceive in what other mode the saints could be delivered into the hand of a spiritual authority, which, in its infancy at least, must have been in a great measure dependent upon the secular power for its very existence, and much more for every degree of active power which it was permitted to assume or exercise.

Accordingly we are informed, by the unerring testimony of history, that an act of the secular government of the empire was issued in the reign of Justinian, whereby the Roman pontiff was solemnly acknowledged to be the head of the church. That emperor, whose reign was marked by the publication of the volume of the Civil Law which was afterwards adopted through the whole extent of the Roman empire, by the different nations who had divided among themselves its territories, was no less ambitious of distinction as a theologian than as a legislator. At an early period of his reign, he promulgated a severe edict against heretics, which contained a confession of his own faith, and was intended to be the common and universal standard of belief to his subjects. The severest penalties were enacted by it against all who refused implicit submission.

A second edict of the same nature was issued by

* See Preface to the second edition, where some reasons are given for this opinion.

Justinian in the month of March 533; and on this occasion he formally wrote to the pope, *as the acknowledged head of all the holy churches, and all the holy priests of God,* for his approbation of what he had done. The epistle which was addressed to the pope, and another to the patriarch of Constantinople, were inserted in the volume of the Civil Law; and thus the sentiments contained in them obtained the sanction of the supreme legislative authority of the empire: and in both epistles, the above titles were given to the pope.

The answer of the pope to the imperial epistle was also published with the other documents; and it is equally important, inasmuch as it shows that he understood the reference that had been made to him, as being a formal recognition of the supremacy of the see of Rome.

From the date of the imperial epistle of Justinian to Pope John, in March, 533, the saints, and times, and laws of the church, may therefore be considered to have been formally delivered into the hand of the papacy, and this is consequently the true era of the twelve hundred and sixty years.

There is no other recorded act of the secular government of the Roman empire, which confers a greater authority on the pope than the one above mentioned. It has indeed generally been supposed that in the year 606 the Emperor Phocas bestowed on the pope the new title of Universal Bishop; but this seems to have been taken for granted by historians and commentators on prophecy without evidence. Paulus Diaconus and Anastasius, the only original historians who mention the grant of

Phocas, do it in such terms as to show that no new title was given by this emperor, but that he merely renewed and confirmed the title of head of all the churches, which had been granted by Justinian, but was afterwards disputed by the see of Constantinople, which wished to appropriate the title to itself. Besides, it may be observed, that the grant of Phocas has not been preserved, and it wants the requisite formality of having been recorded in the volume of the laws of the empire.*

* In order to enable the reader to judge for himself on the subject of the acts of the Emperors Justinian and Phocas, concerning the papal supremacy, I shall lay before him in this note what evidence I have been able to collect on the subject.

The first religious edict of Justinian seems to have been issued in the year 528. It begins with a short preamble, stating that the emperor had thought it fit to declare unto all men his adherence to the tradition and confession of the holy catholic church of God. It then states the substance of the emperor's faith, and next proceeds to pronounce an anathema against all heretics, especially the Nestorians, Eutychians, and the Apollinarians; and from this part of the edict I quote the following passage: "Hæc igitur cum ita se habeant, "anathematizamus omnem hæresin, præsertim *verò* Nestorium, "anthropolatram dividentem unum Dominum nostrum Jesum Chris-"tum, filium Dei et Deum nostrum, nec diserte et secundum verita-"tem confitentem sanctam gloriosam semper Virginem Mariam "Theotocon esse, hoc est, Deiparam," &c. The edict concludes in the following words: "Si enim aliqui post hanc nostram præmoniti-"onem, certo et liquido id cognoscentibus et comperientibus locorum "episcopis Deo amantissimis, inventi fuerint posthac in contrariâ his "opinione esse; hi nullius indulgentiæ expectent veniam: Jubemus "enim tales tanquam confessos hæreticos competenti animadversione "subjugari."

Justinian's next edict is the one upon the occasion of which he addressed his epistle to the Pope, containing an acknowledgment of his spiritual supremacy. This edict begins as follows:

"Imp. Justinian. A. Constantinopolitis.

"Cum Salvatorem et Dominum omnium Jesum Christum verum "Deum nostrum colamus per omnia, studemus etiam (quatenus

Having thus established that the true era of the formal recognition of the papal supremacy was the

" datum est humanæ menti assequi) immitari ejus condescensionem " seu demissionem. Etenim cum quosdam invenerimus morbo atque " insaniâ detentos impiorum Nestorii et Eutychetis Dei et sanctæ " catholicæ et apostolicæ ecclesiæ hostium, nempe qui detrectabant " sanctam gloriosam semper Virginem Mariam Theotocon sive " Deiparam appellare propriè et secundum veritatem: illos festina- " vimus quæ sit recta Christianorum fides edocere. Nam hi " incurabiles cùm sint, celantes errorem suum passim circumeunt " (sicut didicimus) et simpliciorum animos exturbant et scandalizant, " ea astruentes quæ sunt sanctæ catholicæ ecclesiæ contraria. Neces- " sarium igitur esse putavimus, tam hæreticorum vaniloquia et men- " dacia dissipare, quàm omnibus insinuare, quomodo aut sentiat " sancta Dei et catholica et apostolica ecclesia, aut prædicent sanc- " tissimi ejus sacerdotes; quos et nos sequuti, manifesta constituimus " ea quæ fidei nostræ sunt; non quidem innovantes fidem (quod " absit) sed coarguantes eorum insaniam qui eadem cum impiis hære- " ticis sentiunt. Quod quidem et nos in nostri imperii primordiis " pridem satagentes cunctis fecimus manifestum."

In the remainder of the edict, the Emperor gives a statement of his own faith, and denounces anathemas against Nestorius, Eutyches, and Apollinarius, and their followers. The edict is dated on the ides of March, 533. The same edict was addressed to twelve other cities of the empire, among which were Jerusalem, Cesarea, and Ephesus.

Upon the promulgation of this edict, Justinian addressed an epistle to the pope, as the acknowledged head of all the holy churches, which was transmitted by the hands of Demetrius and Hypatius, two bishops. From this epistle I quote the following extracts:

" Victor Justinianus, pius, felix, inclytus, triumphator, semper " Augustus, Joanni sanctissimo Archiepiscopo almæ Urbis Romæ et " Patriarchæ.

" Reddentes honorem apostolicæ sedi, et vestræ sanctitati (quod " semper nobis in voto et fuit et est), et ut decet patrem honorantes " vestram beatitudinem, omnia quæ ad ecclesiarum statum pertinent " festinavimus ad notitiam deferre vestræ sanctitatis; quoniam semper " nobis fuit magnum studium, unitatem vestræ apostolicæ sedis, et " statum sanctarum Dei ecclesiarum custodire, qui hactenus obtinet, " et incommotè permanet, nulla intercedente contrarietate. Ideoque " omnes sacerdotes universi Orientalis tractus et subjicere et unire " sedi vestræ sanctitatis properavimus. In præsenti ergo quæ

year 533, it is requisite that we should endeavour to ascertain, in the next place, upon what principle

" commota sunt (quamvis manifesta et indubitata sint et secundum " apostolicæ vestræ sedis doctrinam ab omnibus semper sacerdotibus " firme custodita et prædicata) necessarium duximus, ut ad notitiam " vestræ sanctitatis perveniant. Nec enim patimur quicquam, quod " ad ecclesiarum statum pertinet, quamvis manifestum et indubitatum " sit, quod movetur, ut non etiam vestræ innotescat sanctitati " quæ caput est omnium sanctarum ecclesiarum. Per omnia enim " (ut dictum est) properamus honorem et auctoritatem crescere " vestræ sedis."

The epistle next states the circumstance of certain men having maintained heretical doctrines respecting the person of Christ, and it then contains a statement of the faith of the church and of the Emperor himself on this point, and it concludes as follows: " Susci- " pimus autem sancta quatuor concilia: id est, trecentorum decem " et octo sanctorum patrum, qui Nicæna urbe congregati sunt: " et centum quinquaginta sanctorum patrum qui in hac regia urbe " convenerunt: et sanctorum patrum qui in Epheso primo congregati " sunt, et sanctorum patrum qui in Chalcedone convenerunt: sicut " vestra apostolica sedes docet atque prædicat. Omnes ergo sacer- " dotes sequentes doctrinam Apostolicæ sedis vestræ ita credunt " et confitentur et prædicant.

" Unde properavimus hoc ad notitiam deferre vestræ sanctitatis " per Hypatiam et Demetrium, beatissimos episcopos, ut nec vestram " sanctitatem lateat, quæ et a quibusdam paucis monachis male " et Judaice secundum Nestorii perfidiam denegata sunt. Petimus " ergo vestrum paternum affectum: Ut vestris ad nos destinatis " literis, et ad sanctissimum episcopum hujus almæ urbis, et patriar- " cham vestrum fratrem; (quoniam et ipse per eosdem scripsit ad " vestram sanctitatem, festinans in omnibus sedem sequi apostolicam " beatitudinis vestræ), manifestum nobis faciatis, quod omnes qui " prædicta recte confitentur, suscipit vestra sanctitas, et eorum qui " Judaice ausi sint rectam denegare fidem, condemnat perfidiam. " Plus enim ita circa vos omnium amor, et vestræ sedis crescet aucto- " ritas! et quæ ad vos est unitas sanctarum ecclesiarum inturbata " servabitur, quando per vos didicerint omnes beatissimi episcopi " eorum, quæ ad vos relata sunt, sinceram vestræ sanctitatis doctri- " nam. Petimus autem vestram beatitudinem orare pro nobis, et Dei " nobis adquirere providentiam."

The above epistle was dated at least as early as the 25th of March, 533; for in his letter to the Archbishop of Constantinople, which

the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years is to be computed, reckoning their commence-

bears that date, the Emperor mentions his having already written to the Pope.

The reply of Pope John to the above memorable epistle is dated the 24th March, 534; and the following are extracts from it:

" Gloriosissimo et clementissimo filio Justiniano Augusto, Johannes " Episcopus Urbis Romæ.

" Inter claras sapientiæ ac mansuetudinis vestræ laudes, Christia- " nissime principum, puriore luce tanquam aliquod sydus irradiat, " quod amore fidei, quod charitatis studio edocti ecclesiasticis " disciplinis, Romanæ sedis reverentiam conservatis, et ei cuncta " subjicitis, et ad ejus deducitis unitatem, ad cujus auctorem, hoc " est apostolorum primum, Domino loquente præceptum est *pasce* " *oves meas:* Quam esse omnium vere ecclesiarum caput, et patrum " regulæ et principum statuta declarant, et pietatis vestræ reverendis- " simi testantur affatus."—* * * * * *

" Proinde serenitatis vestræ apices, per Hypatium atque Deme- " trium, sanctissimos viros, fratres et cöepiscopos meos, reverentia " consueta suscepimus: quorum etiam relatione comperimus, quod " fidelibus populis proposuistis edictum amore fidei pro submovenda " hæreticorum intentione, secundum apostolicam doctrinam, fratrum " et cöepiscoporum nostrorum interveniente consensu. Quod, quia " apostolicæ dectrinæ convenit, nostra auctoritate confirmamus."

Upon the same occasion Justinian also addressed a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, of which I shall give the first paragraph.

" Idem imperat. Epiphanio sanctissimo et beatissimo Archiepiscopo " Regiæ hujus Urbis et Oecumenico Patriarchæ.

" Cognoscere volentes tuam sanctitatem ea omnia quæ ad ecclesi- " asticum spectant statum: necessarium duximus, hisce ad eam uti " divinis compendiis, ac per ea manifesta eidem facere, quæ jam " moveri cœpta sunt, quanquam et illa eandem cognocere sumus " persuasi. Cum itaque comperissemus quosdam alienos a sancta, " catholica, et apostolica ecclesia, impiorum Nestorii et Eutychetis " sequutos deceptionem, divinam antehac promulgavimus edictum " (quod et tua novit sanctitas) per quod hæreticorum furores repre- " hendimus, ita ut nullo quovis omnino modo immutaverimus, im- " mutemus aut prætergressi simus eum, qui nunc usque, coadjuvante " Deo, servatus est, ecclesiasticum statum (quemadmodum et tua " novit sanctitas) sed in omnibus servato statu unitatis sanctissimarum

ment in the above year. Two modes of computing time have obtained; the one is to reckon by complete

" ecclesiarum cum ipso S. S. Papa veteris Romæ, ad quem similia " hisce perscripsimus. Nec enim patimur ut quicquam eorum, quæ " ad ecclesiasticum spectant statum, non etiam ad ejusdem referatur " beatitudinem: quum ea sit caput omnium sanctissimorum Dei " sacerdotum: vel eo maxime quod, quoties in eis locis hæretici " pullularunt, et sententia et recto judicio illius venerabilis sedis " coerciti sunt."

The above documents are to be found at full length in the volume of the Civil Law, (Codicis lib. I. tit. I.) and by being published in that collection, they obtained the stamp of public and legislative authority as the laws of the empire. In these documents we find the emperor publishing a rule of faith to his subjects of the eastern empire, and addressing the pope of Rome on the occasion, as *the acknowledged head of all the churches* (not the western churches only), and requesting his approbation of what he had done. We see the pope, in reply, giving the sanction of his authority, *as the acknowledged head of the church*, to the religious edict of Justinian.

Gothofredus, a celebrated civilian, in his edition of the Corpus Juris, has the following note on the passage of Justinian's Epistle to the Patriarch of Constantinople, above quoted: " Hinc collige, errare " eos, qui volunt imperatorum Phocam primum pro Gregorio Magno " pontifice, sententiam tulisse contra Johannem Patriarcham Con- " stantinopolitanum; quum ex his verbis constet tempore Justiniani " primatum summo pontifici donatum fuisse."

Gravina, in his work on the Roman Law, entitled, Origines Juris Civilis, has the following remark: " Cum tamen sciamus, ipso Justi- " niano teste, qui in Novellis veterem Romam sacerdotii fontem " appellat, Constantinopolitanum antistitem orientalibus episcopis " utcunque prælatum, ipsum tamen simul cum cæteris ecclesiis " Romano paruisse."

I next quote the exordium of an edict of Justinian, being the ninth of the Novellæ Constitutiones, of which the following is the title:

" Ut etiam ecclesia Romana centum annorum gaudeat præ- " scriptione.

Novella Constit. IX.

" Imp. Justin. A. Joanni, viso beatiss. ac sanctiss. Archiepisc. et " Patriarchæ veteris Romæ.

Præfatio.

" Ut legum originem anterior Roma sortita est, ita et summi pon- " tificatus apicem apud eam esse nemo est qui dubitet. Unde et nos

or past time, the other by incomplete or current time. The first of these generally prevails in Europe,

" necessarium duximus, *patriam legum, fontem sacerdotii*, speciali " nostri numinis lege illustrare," &c.

I lastly quote on this subject the words of Justinian in the 131st of his Novellæ Constitutiones, and entitled, De Ecclesiasticis Titulis et Privilegiis. Cap. II. " De Ordine sedendi Patriarcharum," runs thus: " Ideoque sancimus sanctissimum senioris Romæ Papam, primum esse " omnium sacerdotum; beatissimum autem archiepiscopum Constan- " tinopoleos novæ Romæ, secundum habere locum post sanctam " apostolicam senioris Romæ sedem."

Having thus given a view of the different legal documents, in virtue of which the pope was constituted head of the church by the emperor Justinian, I shall now quote the original authorities for the grant of the emperor Phocas, in the year 606.

The first of these authorities is the historian Paulus Diaconus.

In his work, De Gestis Longobardorum, lib. IV. cap. 36, is the following passage:

" Phocas igitur, ut præmissum est, extincto Mauricio, ejusque filiis " Romanorum regnum invadens, per octo annorum curricula prin- " cipatus est. Hic, rogante Papa Bonefacio, statuit sedem Romanæ " et apostolicæ ecclesiæ caput esse omnium ecclesiarum, quia ecclesia " Constantinopolitana primam se omnium ecclesiarum scribebat."

Diaconus writes to the same purpose in his work, De Gestis Romanorum ad Eutropii Historiam Additus, lib. XVII. " Hic (Phocas), " rogante Papa Bonefacio, statuit sedem Romanæ ecclesiæ, ut caput " esset omnium ecclesiarum: quia ecclesia Constantinopolitana pri- " mam se omnium ecclesiarum scribebat."

Anastasius writes as follows in his Historia Ecclesiastica et de Vitis Pontificum, P. II. p. 44. cap. 3. Bonefacius III. Anno Christi 606. Phocæ Imp. 4.

" Bonefacius, natione Romanus, ex patre Joanne Cabaudioce, sedit " menses octo, dies viginti octo. Hic obtinuit apud Phocam Prin- " cipem, ut sedes apostolica beati Petri Apostoli caput esset omnium " ecclesiarum, id est, ecclesia Romana, quia ecclesia Constantinopo- " litana primam se omnium ecclesiarum scribebat."

I am not aware that any other original authorities for the grant of Phocas have been quoted. It will be observed that the above quotations, in themselves, are sufficiently meagre, and there is no appearance in them of any new title having been conferred by Phocas, but merely a confirmation of the one previously given by Justinian, which, in the contests for power between the bishops of Rome and

and the last in Asia. If one event were to happen upon Friday, and another upon Sunday, *we* should say that *two* days only intervened between the two events. If a sovereign succeeded to the throne of a particular kingdom in the year 1800, and died in 1810, *we* should say that he died after a reign of *ten* years.

But an Asiatic computes by current and not by complete time, and he would say, that *three* days intervened between the event which occurred on Friday, and that which happened on Sunday; and that the sovereign who succeeded to the throne in 1800, and died in 1810, reigned *eleven* years. Many examples of this mode of reckoning occur in the scriptures. Our Lord, it is well known, died on Friday and rose on Sunday, and he is uniformly in the scriptures said to have risen after *three* days. Our Lord's second appearance to his assembled disciples after his resurrection, is generally allowed to have been on the Lord's Day, as was his first appearance; yet the evangelist John tells us that his second appearance was eight days after the first.* Zedekiah is said, in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 11. and 2 Kings xxiv. 18.

Constantinople, may very probably have been in process of time disputed by the eastern patriarch. Here is also no original imperial decree or epistle, as in the time of Justinian; and I can scarcely conceive, that after reading the documents of Justinian, any impartial person who has no system to support will, on the meagre testimony of Diaconus and Anastasius, maintain that the papal supremacy had its origin in the reign of Phocas.

I ought to say, in concluding this note, that for the quotations given above, from Gravina and Anastasius, I am indebted to the kindness of friends, not having myself seen the works from which they are extracted.

* John xx. 19. 26.

to have reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: but it is plain from what is said in the following chapter of Kings, from the 3d to the 9th verses, that the *eleven* years of Zedekiah's reign were not complete years; and if we even suppose the first to have been a complete year, and that his reign began on the first day of it, yet it appears that he was dethroned and taken prisoner on the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of his reign; and that on the seventh day of the fifth month, the city and temple of Jerusalem were burnt to the ground by Nebuzar-adan. In this instance then the sacred historian, reckoning by *current* and not by *past time*, denominates a period *eleven years*, which was, strictly speaking, only *ten years four months and eight days*. In like manner, the year of the jubilee was called the fiftieth year, though in complete time it was only the forty-ninth.* Indeed, I know not whether any example occurs in the Old or New Testament of a different mode of reckoning.

In computing *prophetical* time, I presume that it must be obvious to every one, that we ought to attend to those principles on which it hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit to reckon *historical* time. Following then the above mode of reckoning, if the twelve hundred and sixty years of Daniel and St. John commenced in the year of our Lord 533, they must have expired in the year 1792.

This, therefore, is the result of the application of history to the first proposition, that the twelve hundred and sixty years actually commenced in the year 533, and ended in 1792.

* Lev. xxv. 8—10.

PROPOSITION SECOND.

At the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years, the Ancient of Days comes, and the judgment is to sit to take away the dominion of the little horn, to consume and destroy it unto the end.

When the judgment begins to sit, then the twelve hundred and sixty years are ended.

Till the French revolution, the papal power, notwithstanding the partial resistance which it experienced from some of the sovereigns of Europe, continued throughout all the central territories of the Roman empire of the west to hold the saints in subjection. Neither in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, or Savoy, were the protestants tolerated; and the only part of what may be considered a central part of the western empire, where toleration existed, was in some of the cantons of Switzerland. Previously to the French revolution, therefore, it is plain that the judgment had not begun to sit, to consume and take away the dominion of the papacy. Europe appeared to slumber in perfect security; the protestant faith had lost much ground since the period of the reformation, nor did there appear any prospect of its regaining what was lost. Indeed, England was the only kingdom of the ancient Roman empire which had wholly embraced the reformation, and destroyed the papal authority within its dominions.

But at the fall of the French monarchy in 1792, a series of events began, which have, in the short space of twenty-five years, shaken to its foundation the spiritual power of the papacy throughout the greatest part of the western empire. The monastic orders have been annihilated, the property of the

church confiscated; the tithes have been abolished; many spiritual principalities have been secularized; and in France, the Netherlands, and every part of Germany, the protestants have, by the new constitutions of these kingdoms, obtained not only a complete toleration, but an equal admission to offices of public trust with their catholic fellow subjects.*

* It is well known, that by the constitutional charter of France toleration is granted to the Protestants; yet in one of the departments, that of the Gard, and particularly in the city of Nismes, they appear to have suffered grievous persecution. But this one instance of persecution, which is perhaps connected with local animosities, and is also disowned by the government of France, seems not to be sufficient to overthrow reasoning which is founded upon facts of a more general nature.

That the progress of the principles of religious liberty throughout Europe, and consequently the decline of the spiritual power of the pope, have been very great since the French revolution, may be gathered from the following facts which I have gleaned from the public papers.

Times, Dec. 2, 1814.—" Congress of Vienna. Among the few " principles which seem perfectly agreed upon, is one which must " afford satisfaction to all candid and considerate minds. We allude " to the perfect equality which is to be established in Germany, " between the three great religious persuasions, the Roman, the " Lutheran, and the Calvinistic."

The same paper, Dec. 9, 1815.—" *Vienna, Nov.* 21. Our court " does not at present appear to stand very well with that of Rome, " the Austrian government seeking to guarantee its subjects against " the influence of the holy see. The court of Rome has published " several notes and memorials, wherein little respect is shewn for " Austria, who is accused of unjustly retaining Romish provinces. " With these accusations religious opinions are mingled. The Austrian " government has renewed all the ordinances passed since the time of " Joseph II."

London Courier, Sept. 27, 1815.—" *Paris, Sept.* 24. A church " has been opened for the protestants at Venice. The Austrian " government has granted them the free exercise of their religion in " the kingdom of Italy, in the same manner as they have long

These events seem to afford decisive evidence that the judgment, to consume and destroy the dominion of the papacy, began to sit at the fall of the French monarchy in 1792, and consequently that the twelve hundred and sixty years then elapsed: for, as the protestants are now tolerated in the central countries of the western empire, the period during which the saints, and times, and laws of the church, were to be delivered into the hand of the papacy, is evidently past; and from what was said before, it follows that it could only have elapsed at the time of the French revolution.

It is also agreeable to the analogy of the divine government to suppose, that wicked men should be made use of as instruments for the demolition of the power of the papacy; and this has been the case in a very remarkable manner in the present period. The persons who successively were invested with the supreme power in France from the fall of the monarchy, till the recent restoration of the Bourbons, and particularly the remarkable individual who lately reigned in that country, may be considered in the light of public executioners, to whom a work of wrath was committed. They have most awfully fulfilled their commission. But the judgment is still sitting, and we must patiently wait to see the end. The period in which we live is pregnant with events of the most stupendous nature; and if we may judge of the future by what is past, the astonishing

"enjoyed that privilege in Austria. It is believed that this inno-
"vation in the Italian states has been made under an understanding
"with the holy see."

celerity with which events have succeeded each other, seems to show that the utter end of the papal dominion is not distant.

It is indeed true, that the course of things since the overthrow of Bonaparte, seems at first view to indicate, that the power of the pope is recovering its ascendancy. The whole authority and influence of the sovereigns of the house of Bourbon, is thrown into the scale of the Romish church. In Spain, Ferdinand has re-established the Inquisition. In France every effort is used by the royal family, to restore animation to the expiring cause of Rome. The order of the Jesuits has been re-established by a papal bull. The pope has recovered his temporal possessions. But still, all these efforts made to prop up a falling edifice, may be fitly compared to the labours of children to give solidity to houses built with cards or sand. The spirit of the times opposes an obstacle to the partisans of the Romish church, too powerful to be overcome by those restored dynasties, which themselves bear all the marks of the decrepitude of age.*

Moreover, though the late change, which is so glorious in the eyes of worldly politicians, as having been the means of restoring the ascendancy of ancient principles, has apparently tended to prolong the empire of popery, yet let not the Christian over-

* Extract from The Times Newspaper, Dec. 29, 1814.—"*Parma*, "*Nov.* 26. In the greatest part of the states of Italy where the plan "had been formed to re-establish the convents, so much opposition "has been met with from the cidevant monks, that it has been "necessary to desist from the measure. It is not yet known what "part the pope will take, or whether he will revoke the ecclesiastical "pensions."

look in it, the marks of the merciful interposition of God, to procure a respite to the nations of Europe from the final and overwhelming calamities of the third woe, to afford new scope for the circulation of the sacred volume by those societies which have been created or invigorated in consequence of the restoration of peace, and thus to hold out to the nations the message of reconciliation as a celestial balm to heal the wounds of a bleeding world.*

It is evident that the interval of peace, has already been improved for these purposes by the church of Christ, with quite as much diligence, as it has been used by the advocates of the papacy, for strengthening the kingdom of darkness.† Even therefore, if popery should attempt a new struggle, it will probably be analogous to the convulsive

* In the year which immediately succeeded the pacification of Europe, Bible Societies were formed in the following states and cities:—1. The Netherlands; 2. Grand Duchy of Berg; 3. Hanover; 4. Prussia; 5. Saxony; 6. Sweden; 7. Denmark; 8. Lubeck; 9. Hamburg; 10. Dantzik; 11. Erfurt. In the same year the Russian Society, whose rapid progress augurs so happily for the spiritual interests of that vast empire, was consolidated. Had the power of Bonaparte continued unbroken, the means of forming these societies would not have existed, or, to say the least, their operations would necessarily have been circumscribed within very narrow limits. It may therefore be safely affirmed, that all this incalculable mass of spiritual good has, as far as second causes are concerned, arisen out of the triumph of the allied monarchs, and the consequent restoration of peace to Europe. If then popery has gained somewhat in France, Spain, and Italy, from the restoration of the old dynasties, that evil is far more than overbalanced by the triumphs of Christianity in the north of Europe.

† There is another circumstance which ought not to escape the attention of those who are carefully watching the signs of the times. I allude to the extensive co-operation of pious and liberal Roman Catholics, not even excepting the dignitaries of the church, in forming Bible Societies, particularly in Germany, Holland, and Russia.

efforts, sometimes made by beasts of prey, after they have been mortally wounded. The mortal wound of the papal power, seems evidently to have been inflicted at the French revolution; and consequently, we have every reason to suppose, that the judgment then began to sit, to consume and destroy its dominion to the end.

We have thus discovered, that the application of history to the first and second propositions, leads equally to the conclusion, that the twelve hundred and sixty years ended in the year 1792; and as we arrive at this common result by chains of argument which have no mutual connection, the great and interesting fact which is thus proved, receives from this circumstance, further confirmation, and is established on the ground almost of positive certainty.

PROPOSITION THIRD.

The witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth during the whole twelve hundred and sixty years; therefore, when they put off their sackcloth, the twelve hundred and sixty years are ended.

PROPOSITION FOURTH.

The mystical woman, the Church, is to be concealed in the wilderness during the whole twelve hundred and sixty years; therefore, when the woman begins to emerge from the wilderness, that period is elapsed.

Sackcloth is the garb of mourning, and the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth implies their being in a state of mourning on account of the little effect produced by their ministry on the apostate

inhabitants of the earth. The period, therefore, when they cease to mourn (*i. e.* when they put off their sackcloth), must be marked by a great and powerful revival of religion.

In like manner, the abode of the woman in the wilderness signifies that the true church shall be in a barren and unfruitful state, and hidden from the eyes of men. Therefore the time when the woman shall begin to emerge from the wilderness, must likewise be marked by a great and wonderful progress of true religion; and as there is not any more conspicuous mark of spiritual barrenness than indifference about the salvation of others, when the period of the barrenness of the woman shall elapse, it may be expected, that the desire of Christians to evangelize the heathen and the Jews, which had appeared for many ages to sleep, will suddenly revive, and lead to such general exertions for these blessed ends, as shall mark a new era in the history of the Christian church.

Having made these preliminary remarks, let us next turn to history. There have been three eras of light in the church: *1st,* That of the apostles; *2dly,* That of the reformation; *3dly,* The period in which we now live. We may expect to find each of these eras marked in the Apocalypse. The first or apostolic era is accordingly distinguished by the going forth of the rider on the white horse, in the first seal, conquering and to conquer. The second era is pointed out, as I have endeavoured to prove, by the resurrection of the slain witnesses, and their ascension into the symbolical heaven; by the earthquake, and fall of the tenth part of the city. The

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third era has already been distinguished by events in the church, of so transcendently important a nature, and of which the future but daily growing consequences are hidden as yet from our eyes, that it bears all the marks of that period when the witnesses are to put off their sackcloth, and the woman to emerge from the wilderness.

No attentive observer, indeed scarcely the most superficial observer, can be ignorant of the great and wonderful change which has taken place in the christian church within the last twenty-five years. This change is so stupendous, that it has attracted the attention and alarmed the fears even of infidels. The present period has been distinguished, not only by a great revival of religion *within* the church, but by the formation of new institutions, before unheard of, for the dissemination of the light of Christianity over the world. The efforts of these societies have been attended with the most signal success. The British and Foreign Bible Society, instituted only a few years ago, has already given a new impetus to the moral universe. "It is perhaps "only because we live in an age of rapid mutations "and of gigantic conquest, that we contemplate the "movements of this society without astonishment. "Its operations deserve, with respect to their "colossal magnitude, to be ranked with the rise and "fall of empires. A map of its conquests would "embrace almost every circle of latitude. It has "visited the earth in almost all its several quarters, "and there is scarcely a wind of heaven which is "not charged with its high commission."*

* Christian Observer, for the year 1810, p. 775; and if such

The general advancement of the cause of Christ is well described in the following passage from a respectable periodical work : " In the review of the " past, to which we are naturally led on this occasion, " the circumstance with which we are most forcibly " struck, is the different aspect which the Christian " world exhibits at the present moment, from that " which it bore at the commencement of our course. " Nor is the aspect altered only ; it is improved " beyond the fondest dreams of the visionary. If we " could suppose some calm calculating Christian ob- " server to open his eyes, after a ten years' sleep, " on the passing scene, would he not find himself " almost in a new creation ?

" For many an age has the church of Christ been " earnestly praying and longing for the coming of " his kingdom, while there have often been no " cheering appearances to strengthen the faith, or " support the hope, of the pious worshippers. And " had not the harp of prophecy soothed the suffering " world with the prospect of a brighter day—a day " in which the prayers of the faithful should be fully " answered, and all the dark and bloody superstitions " which have deformed the earth, being swept away, " the light of the Lord should arise on Zion, and his " glory be seen in the midst of her ; when the Gen- " tiles also shall come to this light, and kings to the " brightness of this rising—they might well have " despaired to see the goodness of the Lord in the " land of the living.

" To the dawning, however, of this day—the

language might justly be used in 1810, by what forms of expression shall we describe the progress of this wonderful institution in 1817.

"hope of all the saints on earth—the joy of all
"the angels in heaven—the object of the prophecies
"and prayers of the church for more than
"three thousand years—a day which transported
"with rapture those who beheld it even in distant
"anticipation; to the dawn of this blessed day we
"seem to be now approaching. It is impossible to
"regard the signs of the times without perceiving
"that the foundation is now laying for a new and
"better state of things. Contemplate the unex-
"ampled pains which are taken to instruct the poor;
"the glow of holy zeal which is spreading itself
"around for the distribution of the sacred volume;
"and the harmony with which Christians of every
"name have united to diffuse its blessed light!
"See Missionaries going forth with a spirit truly
"apostolic, to carry the glad tidings of salvation to
"every corner of the earth; the scriptures trans-
"lated into more languages than distinguished the
"day of Pentecost, and dispersed into more lands
"than ever the apostles visited; all sects and parties
"who bow the knee in the name of Jesus, rising as
"by one consent, yet without any previous concert,
"to carry on this labour of love! Behold our kings,
"and our princes, and the nobles of the land, bright-
"ening their honours by patronizing this divine
"work! But look to the east and to the west, to
"the north and to the south—the whole moral uni-
"verse is moved. Like some of the effects which
"have recently been produced in the material cre-
"ation, by a power hitherto unknown, we perceive
"in every direction the dry bones shaken and starting
"into life, as if struck by some mighty and per-

"vading influence. Can the Christian contemplate "all this, and not be compelled to exclaim, 'This "is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our "eyes!'"*

I have chosen to give the above quotation at full length, as it contains the testimony of an able and impartial writer, who occupies an hill of observation, a watch-tower on the walls of Jerusalem; and as this testimony is not given with a view to any particular interpretation of prophecy, it is on this account more valuable than any observations which I might offer, since these might be supposed to receive a tinge from the hypothesis which I support. If the above passage contains a faithful picture of the present state of things in the church, there can be no doubt that a new era has commenced; and as the slaughter, resurrection, and ascension of the witnesses, belong to the period of the reformation, the prophetical era into which we have now entered, can be no other than the putting off the sackcloth of the witnesses, and the return of the woman from the wilderness; because no intervening event of consequence is marked in the Apocalyptic prophecies. In effect, the woman, the true spiritual church, is now again discerned by men, in the union of Christians of all denominations, for evangelizing the world; and thus it is, that the members of the mystic woman are distinguishable from the nominal worshippers of the outer court. As the beast has *his* mark, so has the mystic woman; and *her* mark is that love of Christ, which constraineth his disciples

* Christian Observer for 1811, Preface.

to spare no labour or cost in sending forth messengers, bearing the glad tidings of salvation, to the most distant parts of the earth.

Since then it is proved, by the events of the present time, that the witnesses have put off their sackcloth, and that the woman has emerged from the wilderness; it follows as a necessary consequence, that the twelve hundred and sixty years are elapsed.

The exact Apocalyptic period at which the woman begins to return from the wilderness, seems to be when the temple of God is opened in heaven, and the ark of his testament is seen.* This happens, as we have before seen, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.†

* Rev. xi. 19.

† During the four years which have elapsed since the original publication of this work, the whole course of things in the church of Christ has more and more justified my reasoning under these two propositions. The stream of divine light has continued to flow with gradually increasing power. The zeal for the salvation of mankind, among every denomination of Christians, grows in strength from year to year, and manifests itself by the progressive increase of the funds of missionary institutions, even in times of general misfortune and distress. We have witnessed the strange spectacles, of the Mahomedan sovereign of Persia giving his sanction to a translation of the New Testament made by a Clergyman of the Church of England; the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople authenticating, by a formal declaration, the accuracy of an edition of the Modern Greek Testament, printed in England by the British and Foreign Bible Society; and the Metropolitans of the Greek, Catholic, Armenian, and Georgian Churches within the Russian empire, sitting together in their sacerdotal garments, at the first anniversary of the Russian Bible Society. (See Eleventh Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society.) Surely these, and many other facts of a similar nature, loudly proclaim that the Church is no longer in the wilderness.

PROPOSITION FIFTH.

The twelve hundred and sixty years end at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

In the tenth chapter of this work, I have already given those reasons which lead me to coincide in the opinion of Mr. Faber and Mr. Bicheno, that the seventh trumpet sounded in the year 1792, either at the fall of the French monarchy on the 10th of August in that year, or a few months earlier, when the war commenced between France and Austria. Upon this point, new light will probably break in upon us as we advance. Since, therefore, the seventh trumpet sounded in the year 1792, it follows that the twelve hundred and sixty years also elapsed in that year, which agrees with, and confirms the historical inferences drawn from the whole of the preceding propositions.*

PROPOSITION SIXTH.

The times of the Gentiles (i. e. *the twelve hundred and sixty years*) *end when the signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and the distress of nations, mentioned by our Lord in* Luke xxi. 25, *begin.*

It is generally allowed, that our Lord's discourse upon the destruction of Jerusalem, is one of the most difficult parts of the prophetical scriptures; and there is hardly any passage which has more perplexed interpreters.

This remarkable prophecy of Christ is given by

* Bishop Newton, Mede, Whiston, and Dr. More, all concur in thinking that the twelve hundred and sixty years terminate at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, or at the end of the sixth.

three of the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The two first of these sacred writers relate the discourse very nearly in the same language and order. St. Luke omits some things mentioned by Matthew and Mark, and considerably varies the forms of expression used by them; he also furnishes us with a chronological link, connecting the latter with the first part of the prophecy, and shewing us when the signs in the heavens which are mentioned in it are to commence. To arrive at the true meaning of our Lord's discourse, it is therefore necessary to compare the different evangelists with each other, particularly Matthew and Luke. I shall endeavour to do this, in what I am about to offer on this subject.

The whole prophecy was delivered in answer to certain questions put to our Saviour in a private manner, not by all the apostles, but by Peter, James, John, and Andrew;* the three first of whom seem on two other occasions to have been favoured in a peculiar manner above the rest of the apostles, in being the witnesses of their divine master's transfiguration, and of his agony in Gethsemane.

Before we consider the questions of the disciples, it may be proper to inquire what were at that time the opinions which they entertained respecting the kingdom of our Lord, as this is calculated to throw much light on the subject of our investigation. It is well known, that at the period of the appearance of our Saviour, the whole Jewish nation were in earnest expectation of the promised Messiah. But they had very erroneous notions concerning the nature of his mission and kingdom. This arose

* Mark xiii. 3.

from their ignorance of the meaning and end of the typical institutions of Moses, and their paying no attention to those prophecies which expressly foretold the humiliation and passion of Christ. Overlooking all these things, which were to be accomplished at the *first advent*, they most intently fixed their eyes upon the predictions which related to the *second advent* of Messiah, and the prosperity of their nation in the latter days, under his glorious reign. Hence their expectation, that Messiah was about to appear to deliver them from the Roman yoke, and advance them to glory and empire; hence their desire on one occasion to make Jesus a king.* This also throws much light upon the demand made by the mother of Zebedee's children,† and the consequent indignation of the other ten apostles, and upon the disputes which sometimes arose among the apostles, which of them should be greatest.

Our blessed Lord, knowing the weakness of our nature, and its inaptitude to receive the sublime doctrines of his religion too suddenly, did not at once shock the prejudices which the disciples had imbibed in common with the rest of the nation. With inimitable tenderness and condescension, he gradually opened their minds to the perception of spiritual truths, and thus in some measure prepared them for receiving the humble and mortifying doctrines of the cross. At length, having fully established the apostles in the belief of himself, as the promised Messiah, he *from that time forth* ‡ began to instruct them more explicitly respecting the nature of his kingdom, and to show that its very

* John vi. 15. † Matt. xx. 21. ‡ Matt. xvi. 21.

foundation was to be laid in his own humiliation and sufferings. How averse the disciples were to receive these mortifying truths, we may discover from the conduct of Peter on that occasion: and Luke informs us, that "they understood none of these "things; and this saying was hidden from them; "neither knew they the things which were spoken."

Even after our Lord's resurrection, the disciples still clung to the expectation of a temporal kingdom, and their minds were full of it. From this source proceeded the observation of the two disciples who were accosted by the risen Saviour on their way to Emmaus: "But we trusted that it had been he "which should have redeemed Israel;"* and also the question put to our Lord, just before his ascension, by the whole disciples *in concert*: "Lord, "wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to "Israel?"†

When the apostles therefore asked our Lord the questions which are recorded in Matthew xxiv. 3, they certainly had in their minds the above notions of a temporal kingdom, and they alluded to *the coming of our Lord with the clouds of heaven* (to establish the rule of the saints, and restore the kingdom to Israel), which was foretold in Daniel;‡ and not to *the end of the world*, in the common acceptation of the term, but to *the end of the age or dispensation*, during which the four Gentile monarchies were to prevail in the world; at the close of which period, they knew, from the writings of Daniel and the other prophets, that the kingdom of the Messiah was to be established in glory, and the

* Luke xxiv. 21. † Acts i. 6. ‡ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

whole nation of Israel redeemed and gathered into the land of their fathers.

The word rendered "world," in Matthew xxiv. 3, is αιων, which commonly in the version of the Seventy answers to the Hebrew עולם, denoting time hidden from man.* Now it is well known that the Jews divided time into two portions; the one they called עולם הזה, *this* or *the present age*, which comprehended the whole space of time during which the four Gentile monarchies were to continue: the other portion they called עולם הבא, the *age to come*, which they understood was to begin when the Messiah should reign, as is described in Daniel vii. 13, 14. The close of the עולם הזה, or *present age*, was therefore to take place when the fourth or Roman monarchy was finally destroyed.†

* See Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, on the word Αιων.

† Mede, in his Comment. Apocalypt. gives the following quotation from Rabbi Saadias, on Dan. vii. 18: "Because Israel have rebelled "against God, their kingdom shall be taken from them, and given to "these four monarchies, who shall possess the kingdom *in this age*, "בעולם הזה, and shall lead captive and subdue Israel under them "until *the age to come*, עד עולם הבא, until the Messiah reign."

The word *world* (says the author of the Illustrations of Prophecy, in a note) is given up by the majority of English commentators as an improper rendering; and in the Latin versions of Jerome, Erasmus, Beza, and Montanus, αιωνος is translated, not *mundi*, but *seculi*. "Αιων," says Mr. Waple, (on the Revelation, p. 248,) "signifies an "age of the world, or *some eminent period of it*;" and in correspondence with this Dr. Hammond observes (on Luke i. 70), that in the New Testament "it most commonly is used in a general sense, "not for the age of man, nor again for an hundred years, but for an "age of the world, or some eminent part in the division of that."—"Sometimes," says Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, "it is put for that "which continues a long time, and of which the end is not so clear;" and this appears to be the exact meaning which the disciples here annexed to the word. They inquired what would be the signs of the

Having by these observations endeavoured to clear the way for the proper understanding of the inquiries of the disciples, I now proceed to consider what their questions were. Matthew xxiv. 3, συντελεια του αιωνος, at the expiration of which another αιων, or eminent period, was to commence; and accordingly, in the writings of the fathers, (see Suicerus) the word αιων frequently stood for this last period, that is to say, for a thousand years.—In an ancient work, the book of Tobit (xiv. 5.), αιων appears manifestly to signify the first of these great periods, namely, that which is to continue till the commencement of the millenium: for it is there said of the Jews, that when the times of the age are fulfilled (πληρωθωσι καιροι του αιωνος are the words of the Septuagint,) they shall return from all places of their captivity. In Isaiah, on the contrary, (chap. lxv. 18.) the expression, *the age to come*, signifies the *second of these long periods*, namely, the millenium: for, when speaking of the future restoration of the Jews to their own land, he says (according to the amended versions of Bishop Lowth and Mr. Dodson), *but ye shall rejoice and exult in the age to come*. To verse 6. of chap. ix. of Isaiah, reference also deserves to be made: for in that verse, according to the best copies of the Septuagint, and agreeably to the existing Hebrew text, Christ is called, πατερ του μελλοντος αιωνος, the father of the future age. In like manner, in the Vulgate, it is "*pater* "*futuri seculi*." See Mr. Dodson's valuable translation of Isaiah, and his elaborate note on this verse.

In the Targum on Kings, the period of the Messiah is denominated the age to come; and, says Bishop Kidder, "among the other Jewish "writers nothing is more common than to call the times of the "Messiah, the Olam Hava, *i. e.* ὁ αιων μελλων, or the age to come." Demonstr. of Messiah, vol. iii. p. 381.

I close the note with a quotation from Dr Thomas Burnet. "The "expression, αιων μελλων, is either taken, largely, for the times of "the Messiah in general, or, more particularly, for the times of the "Messiah's reign. In this last confined and *more proper* sense, it is "distinct both from the present age, and from eternity, or that time "when Christ is to deliver up all dominion into the hands of the "Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. And in this proper sense, viz. taken "for some age between this present and eternity, it is often used in "scripture. Christ, it is said, will reign εν τω αιωνι μελλοντι. Eph. i. "22, 23."—On the State of departed Souls, p. 282.—Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 527, Note.

"The disciples came unto him privately, saying, "Tell us when shall these things be? and what "shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end "of the age?" Luke and Mark inform us of another question added to the first. Luke xxi. 7. "When "shall these things be? and what sign will there be "when these things shall come to pass?" We may therefore, by comparing the different evangelists, conclude that the questions put to our Lord were three in number:

1st, When shall these things be?

2d, What sign will there be, when these things shall come to pass?

3d, What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age.

The discourse of our Lord will be found to contain answers to all these questions, though not in the exact order in which they were put. But as the minds of the apostles were still deeply imbued with the erroneous opinion, that his glorious reign was not far distant, the first part of the discourse seems to be intended to correct this notion, and to show that a long period of darkness, persecution, and calamity, was to intervene before the second coming of Christ.* This part of the prophecy may be considered as introductory to the rest, and extends in Matthew xxiv. from verse 4 to 14. It concludes by announcing that the Gospel shall be preached in the whole habitable world οἰκουμένη for a witness to all nations, and then the end shall come: that is, the end of the present dispensation, when the

* I am indebted to Mr. Bicheno for this idea: see his Signs of the Times, p. 256: edit. of 1808.

Son of Man comes with the clouds of heaven to establish the reign of God. This final promulgation of the Gospel, which immediately precedes the second advent, must, it is evident, be more universal than those which took place, either in the apostolic age, or at the reformation; for at both these eras, many nations of the world remained ignorant of Christ.

The next part of the discourse contains an answer to the second question: "What shall be the sign "when these things shall come to pass?" viz. the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. In Matt. xxiv. 15, that sign is declared to be when the disciples should see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, stand in the holy place. Luke (chap. xxi. 20) expounds this expression as follows: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with "armies, then know that the desolation thereof is "nigh."

This sign was well understood by the Christians in Jerusalem, and we are informed by history, that as soon as the Roman armies invested the city, they all fled from it, in obedience to the warning of our Lord (given in the next verses of Matthew); and they were thus saved from the destruction which overwhelmed their unbelieving countrymen. Our Lord next describes the greatness of the distress which should then come upon the Jews, and warns his disciples, in Matthew xxiv. 23—26, not to be deceived by any of the impostors who should appear at that time, pretending to be the Messiah; and he signifies, that when his real coming shall take place, there will be no need that one man should carry the

tidings to another, for it will be sudden as the lightning which cometh from the east, and shineth unto the west. "This sudden and universal noto-"riety that there will be of our Saviour's last glo-"rious advent, is signified by the image of lightning, "which in the same instant flashes upon the eyes of "spectators in remote and opposite stations."* In Luke xxi. 24, our Lord adds, that the Jews "shall "fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led "away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem "shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the "times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

The third division of our Saviour's prophecy, contains an answer to the question. "What shall "be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the "age?" Having predicted that Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled, Christ adds, "Then † "shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and "in the stars; and upon the earth, distress of "nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves "roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and "for looking after those things which are coming "on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be "shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man "coming in a cloud with power and great glory. "And when these things begin to come to pass, "then look up and lift up your heads; for your

* Bishop Horsley's Sermons, vol. i. p. 32, 33.

† "The copulative *καὶ*, ver. 25, is to be taken, after the Hebrew "manner, *ordinativè*, for *tum*, *deinde*, which you know is frequent "in the scriptures: *Then shall be signs.*" Mede's Works, Book iv. p. 12.

" redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them
" a parable: Behold the fig-tree and all the trees,
" when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of
" your ownselves that summer is now nigh at hand.
" So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to
" pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at
" hand."

The corresponding passage in Matthew begins at the 29th verse of the chapter already quoted, and ends at the 33d verse. The expression, " im-
" mediately after the tribulation of those days," with which the clause begins, must not be understood as referring alone to the troubles of the Jewish nation at the siege and taking of Jerusalem; for " the tribulation of those days" extends to the whole time of their captivity and dispersion, even to the close of the times of the Gentiles.*

I am now to consider the above signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, in connection with the present inquiry concerning the commencement and end of the prophetical period of twelve hundred and sixty years.

It is manifest that the signs spoken of by our Lord, are in the symbolical, and not the natural heavens; for we are informed, in the subsequent part of our Saviour's discourse, that during the occurrence of these signs, the world in general shall be immersed in carnal security, and anxious occu-

* This is the sentiment of Mede; see his Works, in the place quoted above. It was also the opinion of Bishop Horsley; see his Sermons, vol. i. p. 55: of Episcopius and Tillotson; see Illustrations of Prophecy, p. 392. Indeed this supposition is necessary to reconcile the two evangelists with each other.

pation about the things of this life, which could hardly be the case, if the signs described were in the natural heavens. Indeed, these signs have never been understood in a literal sense by any person conversant in the language of sacred prophecy.

By the signs in the celestial luminaries we are therefore to understand the fall of kingdoms, and the dethronement or humiliation of the sovereigns and princes of those states which are the scene of the chronological prophecies of Daniel and St. John, *i. e.* the body of the Roman empire in its last state.

The awful events which have taken place in Europe since the fall of the French monarchy, are evidently the fulfilment of these signs. At a very early period of the progress of these events, they appear to have arrested the attention of persons well versed in the language of prophecy, and to have excited in their minds suspicions that our Lord's portentous prophecy had begun to be accomplished.

The late venerable and excellent Bishop Porteus, in a Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London, in the year 1794, used the following words: "The present times, and the "present scene of things, in almost every part of "the civilized world, are the most interesting and "the most awful that were ever before presented "to the inhabitants of the earth; and such as "must necessarily excite the most serious reflections "in every thinking mind. Perhaps all these sin-"gular events, to which we have been witnesses, "unparalleled, as they undoubtedly are, in the page "of history, may be only the *beginning* of things; "may be only the first leading steps to a train of

"events still more extraordinary, to the accomplish-
"ment possibly of some new and unexpected, and
"at present unfathomable designs, hitherto reserved
"and hid in the councils of the Almighty. Some
"we know there are, who think that certain pro-
"phecies, both in the New Testament and the Old,
"are now fulfilling; that the signs of the times are
"portentous and alarming; and that the sudden
"extinction of a great monarchy, and of all the
"splendid ranks and orders of men that supported
"it, is only the completion in part of that prediction
"in the Gospel, that '*the sun shall be darkened,*
"*and the moon shall not give her light, and the*
"*stars shall fall from heaven,* before the second
"appearance of the Messiah to judge the earth:'
"all which expressions are known to be figurative
"emblems of the great powers and rulers of the
"world, whose destruction, it is said, is to precede
"that great event. As to myself, I pretend not to
"decide on those arduous points; I pretend not
"either to prophesy, or to interpret prophecy;
"nor shall I take upon myself to pronounce whether
"we are now approaching (as some think) to the
"millennium, or to the day of judgment, or to any
"other great and tremendous and universal change
"predicted in the sacred writings. But this I am
"sure of, that the present unexampled state of the
"Christian world is a loud and powerful call upon
"all men, but upon us above all men, to take pecu-
"liar heed to our ways, and to prepare ourselves for
"every thing that may befal us, be it ever so novel,
"ever so calamitous."

Since the above sentiments were uttered by the

venerable prelate, we have witnessed a series of events the most astonishing that have ever happened in the history of the world. I cannot better describe these events than by quoting a passage on the subject from an able writer of the present day. "The fall of the French monarchy," says this author, "was marked with all the characters of "SUDDENNESS and MYSTERIOUS POWER, which pe- "culiarly appertain to the times of God's extra- "ordinary visitations. Those characters are thus "drawn to our hands by two of the most dis- "tinguished geniuses of that day, who were living "witnesses, together with us, of that stupendous "event.

"In that its *acme* of human prosperity and great- "ness," said Mr. Burke, "in the HIGH and PALMY "STATE OF THE MONARCHY OF FRANCE, it fell to the "ground *without a struggle.*"*

"Remember," said Mr. Gibbon, "the PROUD "FABRIC OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY! Not *four years* "ago it stood founded, as it might seem, on the rock "of time, force, and opinion; supported by the "triple aristocracy of the church, the nobility, and "the parliament. *They are crumbled into the dust,* "*they are vanished from the earth!*"

"Since the departure of these two eloquent writers "we have seen a NEW POWER, assuming the dignity "of EMPIRE, suddenly rise up, and establish his "throne upon the crumbled ruins of that proud and "ancient monarchy; a power which has finally "obliterated the name of ROMAN EMPIRE; has ex- "tinguished the PAPAL MONARCHY; has overthrown

* On the French Revolution.

" the dynasties of Spain, Naples, Savoy, and Sweden, " and the celebrated States of Venice, Tuscany, " Genoa, and Holland; has dissolved the Germanic " Confederacy, has planted new tributary kingdoms " in the view of Christendom, and has at last ren- " dered himself master and sovereign of the CHIEF CITY " and principal territories of the FOURTH and LAST " EMPIRE. And are not these signs in the sun, and " in the moon, and in the stars?" *

The description of these celestial signs in Saint Matthew's Gospel is somewhat more particular than in Luke. It is said by the former evangelist, " The " sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall withdraw " her light." The eclipse of the sun and moon, in the language of symbols, denotes the overthrow of the supreme or imperial powers in the empire which is the subject of the prophecy. " In an empire split " into many kingdoms, like the Roman empire, the " sun is the government of that state, which, from " its superiority of power, resembles the bright orb " of day in the midst of the stars, or independent " kings, of the imperial firmament."† We have accordingly witnessed the extinction of the imperial dignity of the German or Holy Roman Empire, the representative of the Cæsars. We have also seen

* A Christian's Survey of all the Primary Events and Periods of the World, from the Commencement of History to the Conclusion of Prophecy. Much of this reasoning may be thought inapplicable to the present state of things. This is indeed true, if the actual condition of Europe shall prove to be a permanent settlement. But should it be seen afterwards to have been only a pause in the last earthquake, as I have endeavoured to show, then the whole of these remarks retain their original force. March, 1817.

† Faber's Dissert. vol. i. p. 90.

the ancient dynasty of France, which took the sun for its device, with the motto, "*Nec pluribus impar,*" chased from its throne and kingdom, and the reigning monarch and his consort perish on a scaffold. Thus have the sun and moon been darkened. The next particular mentioned by St. Matthew is, that "the "stars shall fall from heaven." This signifies the humiliation of the regal powers within the limits of the Roman empire; and in the quotation given above, there is an enumeration of particulars, wherein this prophecy has been fulfilled. Our own highly favoured country has, through the mercy of God, been exempted from the dreadful evils of foreign conquest and revolution; yet the mysterious visitation of the Almighty upon the faculties of our venerable and excellent sovereign, has caused the regal star of our political heaven to fall from heaven.*

To all the events above mentioned, must now be added, more recent changes of a no less unexpected and stupendous nature, which are to be regarded as a new step, in the fulfilment of the signs in the symbolical heavens. A few years ago, the colossal

* How striking and affecting is this dispensation, when we reflect upon the personal virtues of our sovereign, which had so deservedly given him a firm hold on the affections of his subjects during a reign of half a century!—O what a lesson this of the vanity and instability of human greatness!—How fervently ought Christians now to pray for the Prince Regent and his counsellors, that they may be endued with grace and wisdom from above, to guide the weighty and complex machine of government in these awful times! May they be inclined and enabled fervently to supplicate these heavenly gifts for themselves! and may they know and serve Him, by whom in all times, but especially in these times, kings reign and princes decree justice! May they have grace to "kiss the Son, lest he be angry!" for who shall "stand in the day of his wrath!"

empire of Napoleon Bonaparte, resting one foot on the Vistula and the other upon the Tagus, held in its iron grasp the treasures and resources of the European continent, and wielded its military force with uncontrolled and wanton energy, for purposes which threatened the world with new and unknown evils. But this empire has in its turn vanished from the earth: its sun is now darkened, and the Bourbons have been restored. But their monarchy does not now rest as formerly on the basis of prescription and public opinion. It may be described as hastily ingrafted on the stock of the Revolution, by the diplomatic arrangements of the allied powers, and supported by their armies. A short time may probably discover whether this edifice is likely to possess greater stability than that which preceded it. Should it again fall, it will once more plunge Europe in all the horrors of a revolutionary warfare.

St. Luke tells us that these signs in the sun and the moon and the stars shall be attended "with distress "of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves "roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and "for looking after those things which are coming on "the earth; for the powers of the heavens shall be "shaken." That distress of nations, in its acutest and most complicated forms, characterizes the present period will be disputed by no one: for we are all in a measure participators of those severe sufferings, which now overspread the whole of Europe. The roaring of the sea and waves signifies, in the language of symbols, popular clamours and tumults, and a general spirit of insubordination, loosening

the bands of civil and political society. The shaking of the powers of the heavens, means the shaking of the governments and reigning powers. It is sufficiently obvious to all attentive observers, that these are the precise characters which mark the present awful period of universal and portentous disorder. No era in the history of mankind has been so remarkable as the present one, for a spirit of disorder and insubordination, and impatience of the restraints of law, among the lower orders of society; and it is but too manifest that all existing institutions are in danger of being overthrown by the prevalence of this spirit. It may be said, that the hearts of most considerate persons, who contemplate these things, with the exception of that small and happy number, who put their trust in God, are actually failing them for fear, and for looking after the things that are coming on the earth. No rational person can pretend to conjecture what is to be the end of the present state of things, or can look before him without emotions of fear and alarm.

Thus minutely has our Lord's prophecy been accomplished by awful signs in the symbolical heavens, exactly corresponding therewith; and by the present fearful condition of the nations which occupy the principal territories of the fourth monarchy, a condition altogether without example in the history of the world.

We further learn, from the sequel of our Lord's discourse, that the signs predicted by him are to continue till his advent with the clouds of heaven. This advent, it is evident, is the same with that

mentioned by Daniel, as taking place on the destruction of the fourth monarchy.* The disciples are warned by our Lord himself, when they see the predicted signs, to consider them as the certain and immediate forerunners of his advent in glory, and the redemption of his church, and the establishment of the kingdom of God, no less so than the sprouting of the fig-tree, and all the trees, is a prognostic of the approach of summer. Thus he answers the third question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, "and of the end of the age?"

We now come to the concluding division of our Lord's discourse, Matt. xxiv. 34. "Verily, I say "unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all "these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall "pass away, but my words shall not pass away. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not "the angels of heaven, but my Father only."—Luke xxi. 34. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at "any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting "and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that "day come upon you unawares. For as a snare "shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of "the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray "always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape "all these things, which shall come to pass, and to "stand before the Son of Man."

Every one must see that there is apparently a great inconsistency between what is said in the first part of the above passage of Matthew, and the interpretation of the prophecy which I have offered, since our Lord here appears to affirm that the whole

* Dan. vii. 18, 14.

of the prediction was to be accomplished during the generation then living on the earth. This indeed is the difficulty which, more than any other, has puzzled and perplexed those who have endeavoured to give a consistent interpretation of our Lord's prophecy.

The great and justly celebrated Mede, whose explanation of the whole prophecy is similar to the one given in these pages, in order to do away the objection arising to it from the above clause, supposes that γενεα, the Greek word in the passage, which is translated "*generation*," does not mean a generation of co-existing men, but *a race* or *nation*, and *the nation spoken of* he takes to be that of the Jews. He, therefore, interprets it as signifying that "*the "Jewish nation shall not pass away till all these "things be fulfilled*;" and refers to the declaration of God in Jeremiah xxxi. 35, 36. as being parallel thereto.* That γενεα is sometimes used in this sense, both in the Greek version of the Old and the New Testaments, is shewn by Mede in the passage of his Works referred to. But though the above Greek word occasionally signifies a *nation* or *people*, yet this is certainly not its natural or ordinary meaning; and where it does occur in the above sense, the context points out that it is not to be understood in its general acceptation.

In this passage, on the contrary, the immediate context would rather lead us to understand it in its common meaning of "*generation*" of cotemporary men, and as being used in a chronological sense. Besides, on referring to the version of the Seventy, it will be seen that γενεα is commonly used to translate

* See his Works, Book iv. epist. 12.

the Hebrew word דור, signifying "*a generation*," in the ordinary sense of the word: and accordingly, in most of the Hebrew versions of the Gospels, דור has been used for γενεα, in rendering this identical passage into Hebrew; and we may with humility presume that it was the very word used by our blessed Lord in delivering the discourse. And if this be the case, Mede's translation of it is untenable.

The true solution of this difficulty seems to consist in a close attention to the word which is supposed to indicate the *complete fulfilment* of the prophecy in that generation. The original expression for the clause, "*till all these things be fulfilled*," is εως αν παντα ταυτα γενηται. Now the most proper signification of the verb γινομαι is not, "*to be completely fulfilled*," as it is rendered in the passage before us; but it rather signifies, *commencement running into subsequent continuance of action*. This will appear by substituting it for other verbs which clearly denote the *accomplishment of action*. Thus in the clause of the 21st chapter of Luke, "until the times of "the Gentiles be fulfilled," if γενωνται were substituted for πληρωθωσι, the sense would be materially altered, and the phrase would then mean, *until the times of the Gentiles shall be*, that is, shall *arrive* or *commence*. In like manner, if γενωνται were to be put for τελεσθωσιν, in Revelation xv. 8. the sense would be, *until the seven plagues of the seven angels shall arrive or begin*. These examples show, that the strict rendering of the clause we are now considering ought to be, "*this generation shall not pass* "*away till all these things shall be*, i. e. *shall*

"*begin to be accomplished.*" The expression, *all these things*, must be understood as used collectively to denote the whole series of events contained in the prophecy, which whole series began evidently to receive its accomplishment in that very generation, by the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, and the leading away the Jews captive into all nations. Thus a difficulty, which has so much perplexed interpreters of the scripture, is proved to have no real existence, and it is shown that the appearance of difficulty arose solely from a want of closeness in the translation, and the verb γινομαι being rendered in the same sense, as if it had been τελεω or πληροω, to finish or fulfil.*

* The reader will find the interpretation of the clause, which is here offered, fully illustrated in a paper in the Christian Observer, for April 1811, by Mr. Faber. The subject was for some time discussed, between Mr. Faber and the writer of these pages, in the way of private letters, and the result of these discussions made public by Mr. Faber in the above paper. For my own part, I confess that I was first indebted for the idea which led to this interpretation, to a writer in the Christian Observer, for 1806, p. 145, 146, who signs himself "A Plain Honest Man."

Since the first edition of this work was published, another solution of the foregoing difficulty has been proposed by a writer in the Christian Observer who signs himself C. O. In the phrase, ου μη παρελθη η γενεα αὕτη, he proposes to alter the accents on the last word, and write it αὐτη. He adds: "It is well known, that in the most ancient "manuscripts, written in uncials, or capitals, without points or "accents, the word is ambiguous, and therefore the alteration that "I propose is perfectly allowable."—Having made these remarks, he expounds the prophecy itself in reference to the same events as I have done, and renders the clause containing the difficulty as follows: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up "your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."—"Verily I say unto you, *that* generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled."—The inference he draws from the passage so rendered is, that all the great and awful events mentioned by our Lord, under the figure of

Our Lord having told the disciples, in the words which have been considered, that the generation then living should not pass away till the whole series of events predicted by him began to receive their accomplishment, did thus, in effect, give an answer, as far as it was proper to do it, to the question, "*when shall these things be?*" He afterwards, however, adds, that *that day and hour*, viz. the day and hour of his second advent, were unknown to all, saving the Father.* And in the conclusion of this important and interesting discourse, our Saviour exhorts the disciples to constant watchfulness that they might not be taken by surprise in the day of the second advent; and that when that day should come, they might be accounted worthy to escape the things which should come to pass, and to stand before their Lord and Master.

The inference to be drawn from the preceding inquiry into our Lord's prophecy, with regard to the immediate subject of investigation, must be obvious to the attentive reader. Since a series of events exactly corresponding with those awful signs in the celestial luminaries, which were to take place at the close of the times of the Gentiles, did actually com-

signs in the sun, moon, and stars, shall occupy a space of time less than a generation; so that the very same generation which witnesses the signs in the celestial luminaries, shall also behold our Lord coming with the clouds of heaven.

I have thought it right to place this solution before the reader in justice to the anonymous writer; but I still adhere to the view of the passage which is given above.

* We find in other passages of scripture the expression, *that day*, applied by way of emphasis to the day of the second advent, as being the day, above all others, to be the subject of contemplation. 2 Tim. i. 18; iv. 8.

mence at the fall of the French monarchy, and have continued to proceed with accelerated velocity to the present time; it follows that the times of the Gentiles (*i. e.* the twelve hundred and sixty years) ended at the fall of the French monarchy in 1792; which agrees with the conclusions we arrived at, in considering each of the foregoing propositions.*

There is also an inference to be drawn, from comparing our Lord's prophecy with the account given in the sixteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, of the effusion of the seven vials of wrath, which are the constituent parts of the seventh trumpet. From Rev. xvi. 15. we learn that the period of the vials immediately precedes the second advent of our Lord. In a similar way we have seen, in considering the celestial signs which mark the close of the times of the Gentiles, that these signs immediately precede the second advent: therefore the celestial signs predicted by our Lord must synchronise with the seven Apocalyptic vials. But since the twelve hundred and sixty years end when the celestial signs begin, they equally end when the vials (which are synchronical with the celestial signs) begin, *i. e.* at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which further confirms the truth of the fifth proposition.

* "The present period appears to be no other than 'the fulfilment' "of the regular 'times of the Gentiles' declared by our Saviour, "and the commencement of that last, disorderly, concluding time, "which was immediately to succeed; when the firmament of the "Christian world was to be shaken, the luminaries of its ancient "sovereignties to be obscured or extinguished, its sea of nations "thrown into universal tumult, and the hearts of men moved by "a generalanxiety and dread of the things which are coming next "upon the earth." A Christian's Survey, &c. p. 199.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE PROPHETICAL PERIOD OF TWELVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY YEARS—CONCLUDED.

In the foregoing chapter a series of propositions, which appear to be founded on the scriptures, were laid down, with regard to the commencement and end of the above great prophetical period; and in each of the historical arguments deduced from these propositions, I arrived at the conclusion, that the twelve hundred and sixty years ended at the French revolution. I propose in this chapter to offer an argument in support of this most interesting fact, founded on the consideration of another mysterious number revealed to us in the eighth chapter of Daniel; and I shall afterwards consider some of the objections which have been made to the above conclusion, concerning the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years.

In the course of this inquiry, I shall be led in the first place, to the consideration of Daniel's vision of the ram and he-goat; but I deem it proper to observe that it forms no part of my design, to enter into the full explanation of that vision; but only so far as it seems necessary to do so, for the immediate end I have in view, namely, the investigation of the beginning and end of the mysterious number therein revealed.

In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, the prophet Daniel saw a vision by the river of Ulai in the province of Elam. He beheld a

ram standing before the river with two horns, one of the horns higher than the other, and the higher came up last. He saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward; he did according to his will, and became great. This ram is, as is afterwards declared, a symbol of the empire of the Medes and Persians. The two horns typify these two kingdoms; the higher horn the kingdom of Persia, which was of later origin than that of Media, having till the reign of Cyrus, been only a dependent or tributary state to the more powerful kingdom of Media.

The complete *establishment* of the Medo-Persian empire did not take place till the year A. C. 536, when Cyrus began his reign as sole sovereign of the two kingdoms, on the decease of his uncle Cyaxares. But the *rise* of the empire may be dated from the year A. C. 559, when Cyrus was appointed commander of the united armies of the Medes and Persians, to conduct the war against the empire of Babylon. From that time a federal union, of the most intimate nature, was formed between the two kingdoms, and then it is probable that the ram with two horns first arose.

The period when Daniel first beheld the ram was, however, evidently later than this: for he saw him standing before the river Ulai, or already firmly established to the west of that river, in those provinces which had composed the empire of Babylon.*

* The Hebrew word used to express the *standing* of the ram is עמד, of which the proper sense is not *to stand still*, but "*to continue*, "*subsist*, *be continued*, or *supported*, in the same state, whether of "*rest* or of *motion*." See Parkhurst's Lexicon on the word.

This circumstance shows that the date of the vision cannot be prior to the year A. C. 536; for, as I have said above, the establishment of the empire is not to be dated till that year.*

That the ram's standing *before* the river Ulai denoted his being on the western side of it, will appear evident for the following reasons. A French army beaten out of Germany, when it re-crosses the Rhine, is said in common language to retire *behind* the Rhine; and *vice versâ*, it is considered as *before* or in advance of the Rhine, when it crosses that river to invade Germany. Now on this principle, as the ram's chief career of conquest was confessedly to the west of the Ulai, he could not be said to be *before* that river, till he had crossed it and advanced into the territories on its western bank. It is further manifest, that the ram continued to stand before the river, until his power was broken by the he-goat: for the decisive battle, wherein Darius was finally defeated by Alexander the Great, was fought at Gaugamela in Assyria, to the east of the Tigris, and considerably to the westward of the Ulai. It has indeed been argued, from the ram being spoken of in ver. 6. as the ram which Daniel *had seen*, standing before the river, that his position when overthrown by the goat, must have been different from what it was when Daniel first beheld him; but the verb ראיתי, in ver. 6, is in the *preterite tense*, and the *preterpluperfect sense* which our translators have given to it is altogether arbitrary.

* If the Holy Spirit had intended to show the rise of the empire of the Medes and Persians, and its first conquests, the idiom of the Hebrew would have been different; it would not have been, "I saw "a ram *standing*," but would probably have run in this way: "I saw "and behold there *stood up* a ram with two horns, &c. *and he pushed* "westward, &c."

There are several reasons for believing that this vision must be posterior to the year A. C. 536. 1st. When Daniel originally saw the ram he already had his two horns, and the Persian horn was higher than the other one which symbolized the kingdom of Media. It is added, indeed, by way of explanation, that the higher horn came up last; but it does not appear that Daniel saw this circumstance, for the words plainly imply that the horns were in this state when he first beheld the ram. I conceive, therefore, that the more recent origin of the higher, or Persian horn, was made known to Daniel by the Holy Spirit, perhaps when he wrote down the vision. Now until the reign of Cyrus, which began A. C. 536, the Scriptures inform us, that

But, further, when Daniel saw the ram, he was actively employed in butting with his horns "west-

the kingdom of the Medes was higher than that of Persia. Thus in Dan. v. 31, it is written, that Darius the Mede took the kingdom, and in chap. vi. 1, that he administered its affairs, and set over it one hundred and twenty princes. In the same chapter, ver. 25—27, we have a decree issued by Darius to all the inhabitants of the empire.—On the other hand, after the accession of Cyrus, Persia was placed before Media in the acts of public administration, Esth. i. 3. 14. 18, 19. The sovereign was also thenceforth styled the king of Persia: and therefore the Persian horn now became higher than the other. But since this elevation of Persia over Media did not take place till the first year of Cyrus, being A. C. 536, and since when Daniel saw the ram the Persian horn was already higher than the Median, it follows that the vision of the ram cannot be dated earlier than that year.

2dly, Had the Babylonian monarchy still been in existence at the commencement of the vision of the ram, the analogy of prophecy would have required its being introduced on the scene of action in the shape of a distinct symbol, opposing itself to the establishment of the Medo-Persian kingdom. The whole chronology of prophecy (as observed by Mede in a passage already quoted) is marked by the succession of the four kingdoms of Daniel. Now since when Daniel saw the ram pushing westward, &c. no symbol specially representing the Babylonian monarchy is brought upon the scene as opposing the ram, the conclusion naturally is, that the pushing of the ram belongs to a point in the chronology of prophecy, when the empire of Babylon had already been overthrown, and consequently that this pushing does not relate to the conquests of Cyrus.

3dly, After Cyrus, Darius was the greatest prince who swayed the Persian sceptre. "There have been few princes more expert than he "in the art of governing, or more experienced in the business of war." —"He not only restored and entirely confirmed the empire of Cyrus, "which had been very much shaken by the ill conduct of Cambyses "and the Magian impostor, but he likewise added many great and "rich provinces to it, and particularly India, Thrace, Macedonia, and "the isles contiguous to the coasts of Ionia." Rollin's Ancient Hist. vol. iii. p. 200.—In the second year also of his reign, the decree for rebuilding the temple, which is recorded in Ezra vi. was issued, and in the sixth year it was finished and dedicated. The period in which he filled the throne of Persia is, therefore, a very remarkable one in the history of the church, and seems in every way worthy of having

"ward, northward, and southward, so that no beasts "might stand before him; neither was there any "that could deliver out of his hand, but he did "according to his will, and became great." The commencement of the vision, therefore, belongs to some period of the Persian empire after its establishment, when it was engaged in a series of successful wars, adding to its dominions to the west, the north, and the south. Now, as Cyrus made no conquests after the year A. C. 536, when his empire was established, this vision cannot belong to his reign: neither can it be referred to the reigns of Cambyses and Smerdis, for in their time the kingdom founded by Cyrus was much shaken. But in the reign of Darius Hystaspis, the empire enjoyed a series of uninterrupted prosperity, and Darius added to his already extensive dominions the provinces of Thrace, Macedon, and the Ionian Isles, in the north and west, and India in the south. Darius began to reign in the year A. C. 521, and died in A. C. 485. Soon after his death, in the year A. C. 481, Xerxes undertook his unfortunate expedition against Greece, from which may be dated the decline of the Persian empire; so that after the year 481, the ram ceased to become great, and his power was gradually diminished. The commencement of this vision is therefore plainly limited to the reign of Darius, for at no other period after the establishment of the Persian empire, did it push successfully westward, northward, and southward, and become great.

It will be found, by a reference to history, that

been selected for the opening of a vision containing matter of so much importance.

the period of the reign of Darius, which precisely corresponds with the actions of the ram, when first seen by Daniel, must be somewhere between the years A. C. 513 and 497; for it was then, according to the chronology of Prideaux, that the conquests of Darius, signified by the pushing of the ram, took place. Further, we are told by Rollin, that the expedition of Darius to India, by which the ram pushed south, was undertaken in the year A. C. 508. I learn also from Mr. Bicheno that according to the chronological tables of Dufresnoy, the expedition of Darius into Europe, whereby he added Macedonia, Thrace, &c. to his empire, happened in the same year. In the year, 508, therefore, the ram was pushing westward, northward, and southward; and from this period, I think, there is every reason to suppose that the commencement of the vision is to be dated.*

In the next part of the vision, Daniel beheld a new object, an he-goat with a large horn between his eyes, which came from the west with great velocity, and overthrew the ram. This symbol denoted the Macedonian empire, and the large horn between his eyes represented Alexander the Great. Within a few years after the death of Alexander, his empire was divided into four kingdoms, symbolized by the four horns which arose in the room of the great horn.

* Mr. Faber admits, that the period of the successful pushing of the ram began in the year A. C. 508, and that the date of the commencement of the vision cannot be later than that year: but he maintains that the vision is to be dated from A. C. 536, the first year of Cyrus. My reasons for rejecting this interpretation, will be found in three papers, under the signature of Talib, in the Christian Observer, for November 1808, October 1810, and May 1811.

The prophet afterwards saw a little horn come out of one of these four, "which waxed exceeding "great towards the south, and towards the east, "and towards the pleasant land. And it waxed "great even to the host of heaven, and it cast down "*(some)* of the host and of the stars to the ground, "and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified him-"self even to the prince of the host, and by him the "daily *(sacrifice)* was taken away, and the place "of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host "was placed against the daily *(sacrifice)*, by reason "of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the "ground, and it practised and prospered."

I shall follow the interpretation given by Sir Isaac Newton and Bishop Newton of this symbol, though some modern interpreters, and Mr. Faber among the number, have endeavoured to apply it to the spiritual empire established by Mahummud.* This little horn then I consider, with the illustrious writers above mentioned, to be a symbol of the Roman empire in the east, after its conquests extended to the territories of the he-goat. The Romans became a horn of the goat rising up in his dominions, when the kingdom of Macedon was reduced into a Roman province in the year A. C. 148. From Macedon the Roman conquests extended to the south, to the east, and towards Judea (the pleasant land), by the reduction of Achaia, Asia Minor, and Syria. The Roman horn waxed great unto the host of the sym-

* In two papers in the Christian Observer, I have given my reasons for rejecting Mr. Faber's hypothesis respecting the little horn of the he-goat. See papers under the signature of Talib, in the Christian Observer for April, and November, 1808.

bolical heaven, and cast down some of them and of the stars to the ground, when Pompey took the city and temple of Jerusalem, slew a multitude of the priests employed in the sacrifices, and entered the holy of holies * (A. C. 63.) The Roman horn magnified itself even to the prince of the host, by crucifying the Lord of Glory. It took away the *literal* daily sacrifice of the Levitical worship, and cast down the place of his sanctuary, when Titus took the city of Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

Having brought down the narrative to the period when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, the vision next passes on to the tyranny exercised by the Roman power over the church of Christ. Ver. 12. "An host was placed (or set up †) against the daily

* The context shows that the host of heaven is here used to represent spiritual objects; the symbol therefore denotes not temporal but spiritual princes, *i. e.* the Levitical priests, who were *stars* under the Old Testament dispensation, even as Christian pastors are called stars in the Apocalypse.

† When a commentator on prophecy finds it necessary or expedient, to alter or amend our excellent English version, in order to prove his own particular hypothesis, it is always *a suspicious circumstance*, and I would advise the reader to exercise in all such cases a more than common degree of scrutinizing watchfulness. Having myself, in the clause now before us, somewhat altered our translation, I by no means wish to be exempted from that degree of critical jealousy, which such a circumstance calls for. But I have only changed the rendering of one verb, נתן which signifies *to give, to put, to place.* The first of these senses is attributed to it by our translators in this passage, whereas, in two analogous and parallel clauses, Dan. xi. 31, and xii. 10, they have rendered it *to place*, or *set up.* Believing that the translation in these passages, is the accurate one, I have in like manner rendered the Hebrew phrase וצבא תנתן *and a host was placed (or set up)* instead of *a host was given.* My

"(sacrifice) by reason of transgression, and it cast "down the truth to the ground, and it practised and "prospered."

In interpreting this clause, we must recollect that after the city of Jerusalem with its temple had been destroyed by Titus, there no longer remained *a literal* temple, or a *literal* daily sacrifice, and it therefore becomes necessary in the period subsequent to the above event, to interpret these objects in a symbolical sense. Now we learn in the New Testament, that the temple when used symbolically signifies the church of Christ; Sometimes, as in 1 Cor. iii. 16, it is applied to the spiritual church of true Israelites, and at other times, as in 2 Thess. ii. 4, to the visible, external, professing church. The daily sacrifice of the visible church, is a *form of sound words* suited to the pure worship of the Father, through Jesus Christ the only mediator between God and man, and also the due administration of the sacraments. Of this temple, the daily sacrifice is taken away, when the form of sound words is corrupted by worship addressed to other mediators than Jesus Christ, as to the Virgin Mary

interpretation of the prophecy, however, by no means depends upon this altered translation. Admitting, that the actual rendering of the phrase were accurate, the clause might be interpreted to signify that the host, or priesthood of the professing church, should be given into the hands of the Roman power, and by that power, be used as its instrument in corrupting the daily sacrifice, or pure worship of God. If the reader would see how this was fulfilled, let him look into ecclesiastical history, and particularly the acts of the second Nicene Council.

The attentive reader will see from what is contained in this note, that I consider the host set up against the daily sacrifice, to mean precisely the same thing as the abomination of desolation, in the other passages mentioned, viz. Dan. xi. 31, and xii. 10.

and the saints. The worship of the professing church then ceases to be the daily sacrifice ordained of God, and becomes an abomination in his sight.

Upon similar principles we must interpret *the host* set up in the spiritual temple. The Hebrew word צבא signifying *an army*, or *a warfare*, is used in the Old Testament to denote the sun, moon, and stars, the host of the visible heavens, or the angels who are the host of the invisible heavens.* In its symbolical sense, when it is applied to the literal or Levitical temple, it signifies the priests who therein ministered before the Lord; and where it refers to the Christian church or spiritual temple, the same word means the bishops and presbyters of the church, who are expressly called stars, and also angels in Rev. i. 20.

Now in the verse of Daniel which I am considering, the scene of the vision is in the professing Church of Christ, or spiritual temple. Therefore the host which is said to be "*set up against the* "*daily sacrifice*," must mean an antichristian priestly power, established *within the church*, and exercising its authority against the pure worship of God, casting down the truth to the ground, and practising and prospering against it. Such was the papacy.† The pope was, as we have seen in the last chapter, set up or established as a priestly power, or host, in the symbolical temple, or professing

* 1 Kings xxii. 19.

† I would here request the reader to compare with what I have written, the description of the papal power, given by St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. and to consult Bishop Newton's Exposition of that prophecy.

church, when he was solemnly acknowledged by Justinian as head of the church. The pope and his clergy exercised their authority against the daily sacrifice of the church, or the pure worship of God; they cast down the truth to the ground and cruelly persecuted the saints, and thus practised and prospered.* This power was set up in the church by the Roman emperors of the east, and therefore it in all respects answers the description given of the symbolical host in the passage now before us.

In thus comparing the exploits of the horn of the he-goat, which was at first little, but afterwards increased by conquest to a gigantic stature, and reached even unto the host of heaven, with the history of the Roman empire, in its connection with the dominions of the he-goat, and with the Jewish and Christian churches, we discover the most minute and circumstantial correspondence between them. Moreover, the rise of the horn was to be at the end or latter part of the four kingdoms (verse 23), when transgressors were come to the full. The Romans accordingly became an horn of the he-goat, and

* If the reader would see a remarkable illustration, of the manner in which the papal power exercised its authority against the pure worship of God, let him refer to the epistles of Pope Gregory II, to the emperor Leo the Isaurian in defence of image worship, which Leo had exerted all his authority to repress. In these epistles, the following expressions are to be seen. "Num tibi justum videtur imperator "has imagines venerari an erroris diaboloci?" "Non animadvertis "hunc tuum conatum quo adversus imagines insurrexisti facinus est "turbulentum et insolens et superbum. Cum ecclesiæ Dei alta pace "fruerentur, tu pugnas, et odia, et scandala suscitasti." These Epistles are to be found in the Acts of the Council of Nice.—Vide Sacro Sancta Concil. Lutetiæ Parisiorum 1671, Tom. vii. p. 3—22. Gibbon also quotes the Epistles, see vol. ix. p. 134.

established themselves in his dominions exactly at the end of the four kingdoms, and when the transgressors of the Jewish nation were come to the full, as there was at that time a great falling away from the true religion among the Jews, "the customs of "the heathen nations were introduced, the youth "were trained up and exercised after the manner "of the Greeks, and the people apostatized from the "true religion, and even *the priests*, 2 Macc. iv. 14. "*had no courage to serve any more at the altar,* "*but despising the temple and neglecting the sa-* "*crifices, they hastened to be partakers of unlawful* "*diversions.*"*

* Vide Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, Dissertation XV.—It may be proper to observe, that the first part of the 23d verse is by the Septuagint rendered as follows: "At the end of their kingdom, "when *their iniquities* are filled up," *i. e.* the iniquities of *the four kingdoms.* Accordingly, in the very year that Paulus Æmilius vanquished Perseus, the last king of Macedonia, and thereby put an end to that kingdom, the temple of Jerusalem was, by command of Antiochus Epiphanes, consecrated to Jupiter Olympius, and his image set upon the very altar: thus the daring iniquities of these kingdoms were filled up.

I shall here give my reasons for rejecting the application of the little horn of the he-goat, to the religion and spiritual empire of Mahummud.

1st. The little horn was to arise at *the latter end* of the four Greek kingdoms, symbolized by the four horns of the goat, Dan. viii. 23. Now Mahummud did not appear till near seven centuries after the fall of the last of these kingdoms. To get quit of this chronological objection, Mr. Faber translates the Hebrew phrase in the above clause, באחרית מלכותם *in the futurity of their kingdom:* that is, according to his view, in some period subsequent to the termination of these kingdoms. I myself believe that the word אחרית will bear no such meaning, nor does Mr. Faber support his argument by the authority of any version ancient or modern. The literal rendering of the words is *at the end of their reign*, or exactly at the period when their reign or dominion ceases. It is rendered by the Seventy

I have already observed, that it is not my purpose to enter into the consideration of the present vision of Daniel, any further than is necessary to elucidate the more immediate object of my researches. I now, therefore, proceed to that part of it which has an immediate relation to the inquiry concerning the twelve hundred and sixty years.

Dan. viii. 13. "And I heard one saint speaking, "and another saint said unto that certain *saint* "which spake, How long (shall be) the vision (con-"cerning) the daily sacrifice and the transgression "of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the "host to be trodden under foot?" Bishop Newton remarks, "In the original there is no such word as

ἐπ' ἰσχατων της βασιλειας αὐτων, and no other version that I have seen gives a different sense.

2dly, The spiritual daily sacrifice of the Christian Church, never was taken away by the false religion of Mahummud. That religion is indeed an abomination, but it is an abomination *without the church*. Neither the Saracens nor Turks have interfered with the worship or doctrines of the Greek Church, or refused to tolerate its worship. It is impossible therefore to show, that they have in any sense whatever taken away the daily sacrifice of the church, and placed in it the abomination of desolations. To affirm that the conquest of the *Greek empire* by the Mahomedan power, was the taking away the daily sacrifice of the *Church*, is to mingle things secular and spiritual, in a manner which introduces utter confusion into the symbolical style of prophecy.

3dly, The Roman power, by conferring on the Pope the title of Head of the church, and by introducing idolatry into the Greek and Latin churches, had taken away the daily sacrifice, and placed the abomination of desolations in both these churches, before the appearance of Mahummud.

For these reasons, which I advanced nine years ago, and to which it appears to me that no sufficient answer has ever been given, I must continue to think, that the novel application of the foregoing symbol to the Mahomedan power, plausible as it certainly is at first view, has yet no foundation in truth.

"*concerning;*" and Mr. Lowth rightly observes, that the words may be rendered more agreeably to the Hebrew thus: "For how long a time shall the "vision last, the daily sacrifice be taken away, and "the transgression of desolation continue?" &c. The answer to this question is, "Unto two thousand "three hundred days" (or, evenings and mornings); "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Bishop Newton maintains that, "as the question was asked, "not only *how long the daily sacrifice shall be* "*taken away, and the transgression of desolation* "*continue;* but also, *how long the vision shall* "*last?* so the answer is to be understood, and these "two thousand and three hundred days denote the "whole time from the beginning of the vision to "the cleansing of the sanctuary." In the justice of this observation I entirely concur. The cleansing of the sanctuary is a symbolical phrase, the meaning of which cannot be misunderstood. It will receive its accomplishment when the visible church of Christ shall be freed from those Gentiles which were to tread it under foot, during the space of forty-two prophetical months, or twelve hundred and sixty years. The cleansing of the sanctuary, therefore, begins at the same time with the finishing of the mystery of God,* namely, on the sounding of the seventh Apocalyptic trumpet, (when the destruction of the papal power takes place,) and on the sitting of the judgment mentioned in Dan. vii. 9, 10, for at that period the wrath of God goes forth against the apostate nations of the Roman empire, and the time is declared to be come, to give reward unto his

* Rev. x. 7.

servants the prophets, and to them that fear his name, and to destroy them which destroy the earth.*

This is further apparent from what is communicated to Daniel, by the angel Gabriel, in the 17th verse of the chapter under consideration. It is there said, that the vision (shall be) unto the time of the end, *i. e.* it shall reach unto the time of the end. Now the time of the end is that of the seventh trumpet, and of the judgment mentioned in Dan. vii. and also of the seven vials of wrath. Therefore we may conclude that this vision of Daniel reaches to the close of the period during which the saints were to be given into the hand of the little horn, Dan. vii. 25. *i. e.* to the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years. Consequently the two thousand three hundred days of the vision must be prophetical days, used for years; and these two thousand three hundred years end precisely at the same time with the twelve hundred and sixty years.

Now in the series of scriptural propositions which were discussed in the last chapter, I arrived at the conclusion, that the twelve hundred and sixty prophetical years expired in the year 1792, it therefore follows, that the two thousand three hundred years which are shown to conterminate with the former period, must also have ended in the same year 1792.

But if this conclusion be right concerning the close of these two prophetical periods, then the commencement of the two thousand three hundred years, when calculated backward from their supposed termination, ought to be found to coincide with the opening of the vision of the ram. Accordingly, if

* Rev. xi. 18.

two thousand three hundred years be computed back from 1792, they bring us to the identical year, A. C. 508, when I have endeavoured to show, that Daniel first saw the ram pushing northward, westward, and southward.* These various, and mutual

* It may, without injury to the foregoing arguments respecting the date of the vision of the ram, be admitted, that it would have been impossible to determine, *a priori*, the true era from which to calculate the commencement of the period of 2300 years, without the help of some fixed data for ascertaining its termination. But as it has been shown that the 1260 and 2300 years conterminate, and that the former period ended in 1792, we are thus furnished with the data we require: and calculating backwards, we arrive at a period when the Persian empire was in the exact situation signified by the actions of the symbolical ram, as first seen by the prophet. It is on the same principle, that the date of Daniel's seventy weeks, and various other periods mentioned in the scriptures, are calculated: viz. first, by ascertaining their termination, and then computing backwards. Thus, it would be impossible to decide, *a priori*, from which of the three edicts passed for the restoration of the Jews by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the seventy weeks are to be reckoned; or at what precise time the seventy years' captivity in Babylon commenced, or the four hundred years during which the posterity of Abraham were to dwell in Egypt.

The same principle for ascertaining the dates of the prophetic period in Dan. viii. 14, has been adopted by Mr. Faber; but as he has found it impossible to make the number of 2300 tally with his own supposed end of the 1260 years, he has on the authority of the Vatican edition of the Septuagint, adopted the reading of 2400 in that passage, and this period he computes from the first year of Cyrus, and supposes it to end in the year 1866. In two papers in the Christian Observer, I have shown, that there is no support given to this various reading either by the genuine principles of scriptural criticism, or by any other edition of the Seventy; for they all, with the exception of the Vatican edition, agree with the Hebrew text. Moreover the Vatican manuscript also supports the common reading. It appears to me, that it would be quite as admissible to found an interpretation of prophecy upon an error which were to creep into a particular edition of our English Bible, as upon this various reading of the Vatican edition of the Seventy, which must, upon every sound principle of criticism, be pronounced a typographical error.

coincidences, therefore, both confirm each separate conclusion to which they have relation, and also give new strength to all the arguments already advanced, respecting the commencement and end of the twelve hundred and sixty years.

Among the various objections which have been made to the conclusion that the prophetical period of twelve hundred and sixty years ended in the year 1792,* I am not aware that any is entitled to much weight, excepting one which is founded on a passage in the last chapter of the book of Daniel. At the conclusion of the prophecy contained in the 11th, and the beginning of the 12th chapter, it is said, v. 5, "Then I Daniel looked, and behold there "stood other two, the one on this side of the bank "of the river, and the other on that side of the bank "of the river. And one said to the man clothed in "linen, which was upon the waters of the river, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was "upon the waters of the river, when he held up his "right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and "sware by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be "for a time, times, and a half: and when he shall "have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy "people, all these things shall be finished. And I "heard, but understood not: then said I, O my "Lord, what shall be the end of these things? "And he said, Go thy way, O Daniel, for the words

* See various papers on this subject, by Mr. Faber, in the Christian Observer, for the years 1808, 9, 10, and 11. See also papers on the same subject, under the signature of Talib, in the above publication, for the years 1807, 8, 9, and 11.

"are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end. "Many shall be purified and made white, and tried, "but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the "wicked shall understand, but the wise shall under-"stand. And from the time that the daily sacrifice "shall be taken away, and the abomination that "maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand "two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that "waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred "and five and thirty days. But go thy way till the "end be; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at "the end of the days."

In the above passage, three different numbers are mentioned; the first is *a time, times, and a half,* (i. e. the twelve hundred and sixty years)—the second number is twelve hundred and ninety days—and the third is thirteen hundred and thirty-five days; and in both of the last numbers, the days being prophetical, are to be taken for years. It is now agreed by most writers on prophecy, that the three numbers all begin together; that the second contains a period of thirty years over and above the first, and the third a further term of forty-five years beyond the second. It is evident that the end of the last period of thirteen hundred and thirty-five years, is to be a time of great blessedness; and it probably introduces the full glories of the millenium after the binding of Satan. At the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years, we have seen that the judgment mentioned in the seventh chapter of Daniel and the destruction of the papacy commenced, and also the celestial signs mentioned by our Lord, in Luke xxi. 25. as the forerunners of the redemption of the

church. What is to occur at the conclusion of the intermediate period, is no where expressly revealed, and we cannot with certainty conjecture; but it seems probable that it will be marked by some great and conspicuous event, which I formerly thought would be the battle of Armageddon. But events had not then explained, that the vision of the holding of the winds in the seventh chapter, indicates a period of universal peace, before the end, which necessarily retards the development of the concluding scenes of the prophecy. I now conceive, that the close of the intervening period of thirty years may very probably be marked by the commencement of the national restoration of Judah;* and that the dreadful day of Armageddon, and the treading of the wine press will take place, at some time between the end of the twelve hundred and ninety, and thirteen hundred and thirty-five days. Be this as it may, the end of the twelve hundred and ninety days, if the reasoning contained in this and the foregoing chapter be just, will be in the year 1822.

The argument which Mr. Faber founds upon the preceding passage, against my conclusion, with respect to the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years, is as follows. The man clothed in linen declares, in the seventh verse, that "it shall be for

* It is worthy of notice, that though it was revealed to Abraham, Gen. xv. 13, that his seed should dwell in a land not their's 400 years, yet, in Exod. xii. 40, we learn, that the actual period of their sojourning was 430 years. Now as almost every past event of the history of God's ancient people shadowed forth something future, I am inclined from these passages to infer, that precisely at the end of Daniel's 1290 years, their present captivity shall cease, that number being thirty years more than the 1260.

"a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have "accomplished to scatter the power of the holy "people, all these things shall be finished." Now Mr. Faber reasons, that we are to conclude from these words, that the restoration of Judah, "the "accomplishing to scatter the power of the holy "people," shall begin precisely when the twelve hundred and sixty years end; but the restoration of Judah is not yet commenced, therefore the twelve hundred and sixty years cannot be elapsed.

In answer to this argument, I observe that the angel does not say that the *accomplishing to scatter the power of the holy people* shall be at the close of the time, times, and an half; but he affirms that it shall be *when all the things contained in the preceding prophecy are finished:* when he shall have accomplished to scatter, &c. "all these things (all the "things before predicted) shall be finished." Now the last of the things before predicted, Mr. Faber himself being the judge, is the fall of the wilful king between the seas on the glorious holy mountain, (Dan. xi. 45) which event Mr. Faber places, not at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty, but of the twelve hundred and ninety years. Therefore, even the principles of Mr. Faber, when applied to the form of expression used by the angel, lead us to conclude, that the restoration of Judah, "the accom-"plishing to scatter the power of the holy people," does not happen till the end of the twelve hundred and ninety years.

Were my view of this passage singular, I might have reason to suspect its accuracy, and to acknowledge that there is some weight in the objection of

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my learned and respectable opponent. But the very same interpretation of it is given by Mr. Wintle, as quoted by Mr. Faber, in his work on the Restoration of Judah. "Mr. Lowth," says Mr. Wintle, "has "recounted a number of passages in the prophets, "which indicate the restoration of the Jews in the "latter days, or when the fourth monarchy shall "expire. At this decisive period, or after the twelve "hundred and sixty years of the reign of antichrist "(popery), and the addition of another short term "for the restoration of the Jews, will be the end of "these wonders or marvellous things inquired after "in the last verse." Wintle on Dan. xii. 7. "Though the reign of antichrist seems here fixed "for twelve hundred and ninety years, which is "a term of thirty years more than was mentioned in "ver. 7, the excess, in the opinion of some, is the "time allotted for the collecting of the Jews from "their captivity among all nations, or the several "countries of their dispersions: and at the close of "ver. 7, there does seem to be a further period "alluded to for this purpose, after the time, times, "and a half, or twelve hundred and sixty years." Wintle on Dan. xii. 11.

But some may be inclined to object, that if my opinion be true, then five years only remain till the close of the twelve hundred and ninety years, and as yet we see no signs of the restoration of Judah; and that it is incredible, that such a mighty event should be accomplished within so short a time as five years. To this objection I reply, that nothing is impossible to the power of God. The redemption of Israel out of Egypt was a very sudden

and unexpected event, and was accomplished in the space of only one year; and had it not been for the unbelief of the children of Israel, in receiving the evil report of the spies,* they would have entered into the land of Canaan before two years had elapsed from the appearance of God to Moses in the burning bush.† Now we have every reason to believe, that the future restoration of this wonderful people, in the marvellous circumstances that shall accompany it, will resemble their first redemption. From the consideration of the prophecy, in Isaiah lxvi. 7—9, Mr. Faber concludes, that "the conversion of Judah "will be sudden as that of St. Paul, and general as "that of the congregation of St. Peter;"‡ and if their conversion be thus sudden, we may suppose that their restoration will be no less so. In the prophecy of Micah there is a passage which confirms this idea. The prophet having uttered the following prayer for the restoration of the ancient church of God: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock "of thine heritage which dwell solitarily in the "wood in the midst of Carmel; let them feed in "Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old;" this is the remarkable answer which the Lord condescends to return to it: "According to the days of thy "coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show "unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see "and be confounded at all their might: they shall "lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall

* Numbers xiii.

† On this point I follow the chronological tables of the Ancient Universal History.

‡ Micah vii. 14—17. Mede likewise supposes that the conversion of Judah will be sudden, like that of St. Paul. See his Works, Book iv.

"be deaf. They shall lick the dust like the serpent, "they shall move out of their holes like worms of the "earth: they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, "and shall fear because of thee."

From the above passage there is every reason to believe, that the future redemption of the Jews will be accompanied with all those tokens of miraculous interference which distinguished the exodus from Egypt; and consequently that the absence of any appearances of their immediate restoration, by no means authorizes an inference that it is at any great distance.*

* Since the above was written, a paper has been published by the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, containing some very remarkable information concerning the state of that people on the continent; and showing that they have a strong persuasion of the approach of their national redemption. The Rev. Mr. Nitschke, of Niesky, in Upper Lusatia, communicates to the Society the following extract of a letter from Mr. Nietz, a merchant in Riga, dated 5th March, 1811.

"My son was last summer in the Crimea, and returned towards the "end of autumn by way of Odessa. In Odessa he heard a report, "that many Jewish families emigrated through that town. During "his journey through Poland he met himself many travelling Jews. "When he afterwards lodged in a town inhabited by Jews, and met "there with a German Jew, he entered into conversation with him, "and asked him to what country the emigrating Jewish families went. "He replied, to Palestine, to settle in the country of their fathers, "having a presentiment that the Messiah would now soon come. "The rich of the nation, scattered in different parts of the world, "made collections for the journey expenses of the poor. This "account of my son excited my attention; I wrote to one of our "friends at Wilna, as Poland is the chief seat of this people, and "asked him concerning these movements, and the probable causes "of them, to which I received, within these few days, the following "answer.

"'I have also received interesting accounts concerning the Jews; "there is among them a general desire to return to the land of their "fathers. Many of them are probably impelled by need, as there is

It may also be added, that though as yet there be no appearances of the restoration of Judah, we have reason to think that their national repentance, which we learn from Deuter. xxx. 1—3 shall immediately precede the former event, is already beginning. A simultaneous movement in the Jewish mind is taking place in various countries. Many Jews in England, and likewise in different parts of the Continent, have not only shown a disposition to read the New Testament, but have become stated contributors to Bible

"a stagnation of all trade here: but many are moved by the ex-
"pectation of the coming of Messiah in about eight years. The
"same persons from whom I accidentally heard this, told me on
"another occasion, that fifteen years hence probably no Jew would
"be left in this country. In the present times of confusion, this
"memorable people, scattered in all the world, is little noticed; but
"if the above information is confirmed in process of time and more
"generally, that impulse among them is certainly one of the remark-
"able signs of the times.'"

The Rev. Mr. Nitschke continues as follows: "This intelligence
"excited my attention; and as I undertook another journey to the
"German colonies in Poland, in the months of May and June, 1811,
"I resolved to ascertain the foundation of these facts. In two towns,
"which are inhabited by many Jews, I received from their leaders
"the following account: That it was certainly true, that for two
"years some hundreds of Jewish families had emigrated from Poland
"to Palestine. Inquiring into the purpose of their emigration,
"I was answered, that they hoped the promises of the prophets
"would now soon be accomplished; that the Lord would gather the
"people of Israel from all parts of the earth, where they were
"scattered, into the land of their fathers; and that they would
"there wait for the appearance of the Messiah; for after their rabbis
"had often been mistaken in fixing the time of his coming, they
"now were persuaded that he would come at length. When I
"replied that they might be mistaken, they said, No matter; if
"those who now go to Palestine, should not live to see the coming
"of the Messiah, they however are gathered into the Holy Land
"with their fathers, and whenever the Messiah comes they will
"be raised from their graves."

Societies. When we connect these interesting and encouraging facts with the prophecy in Isaiah lxvi. 7—9. and add to them the circumstance, that a version of the New Testament in pure Hebrew has nearly been completed for the use of the Jews, and is indeed partly in circulation among them, and meets with every acceptance, we have surely reason to hope that the happy day is near at hand, even at the door, when the Redeemer shall come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

* I select the following facts from the Eighth Report of the London Jewish Society, and from the Correspondence which has since been published in the Jewish Expositor, and by the Bible Society.

"In the St. Saviour's and St. Thomas's districts of the Borough, "there are three or four Jewish families subscribers to the Bible "Association. In St. George's, a Jew contributed for the purpose of "obtaining a Bible for a Christian boy who worked with him. A few "doors from his house, one of the children of Israel, a native of "Poland, though himself possessed of a Bible in his vernacular tongue, "enrolled his name as a subscriber. In the same Association, another "Jew is mentioned as having become an active member of the Com-"mittee.

"The Third Annual Report of the Covent Garden Bible Asso-"ciation, announces the interesting fact, that among one thousand "names who have within a few months been added to their lists as "subscribers, they have the happiness to number many of the stock "of Israel."

Extract from the Second Report of the Aldgate Association.

"Many of the Jews have manifested an anxious desire to obtain "the English Bible; and others have, with the utmost readiness, "become free subscribers to this institution. To the Jews alone "twenty-seven Bibles have been sold, and forty-seven of them are "now subscribing to this Association."

Extract from a Letter of the Secretary of the Frankfort Bible Society, to the Rev. Dr. Steinkopff.

"In consequence of the public advertisement, in which we an-"nounced the establishment of our Bible Society, the attention of the "Jews has been drawn towards it, and some expressed their regret

upwards of two millions of Jews, the importance of such a decree may be easily estimated. Certainly it must be regarded as one of the signs of the times. I copy the Edict from the New Times Newspaper of May 5, 1817.

"St. Petersburg, April 12.—On Easter Sunday there was published "a very remarkable imperial mandate in favour of the Jews who are "converted to Christianity; the following are some of the chief "articles:—

"Art. 1. All Jews embracing the Christian religion, no matter of "which confession, shall have privileges granted them, whatever "profession they may adopt, suitable to their knowledge and abilities.

"2. In the northern and southern governments lands shall be "assigned them gratis, where such as please may settle at their own "expense, under the name of *Society of Jewish Christians.*

"3. This Society shall have its own privileges.

"4. At St. Petersburg a Board shall be formed, of which Prince "Alexander Golyzen shall be President, under the denomination of "Board for the Affairs of the Jewish Christians, on which and on no "other magistrates (except in criminal cases), the Society depends.

"5. This Board is bound to attend to every thing relating to the "settlements, and to report on it to the Emperor. In the settlements "of the Jewish Christians, which are given them as a hereditary pro-"perty for ever, the Society can carry on any kind of professions, "build cities, villages, or single dwellings, the lands are given to the "whole community, but not to individuals, and cannot be sold or "mortgaged to strangers.

"In these settlements the Jewish Christians and their posterity "have entire religious liberty in the Christian confession of faith "which they embrace. The society is under the immediate protection "of the Emperor, and depends entirely on the Board in St. Petersburg, "to which alone it gives account. No other local magistracy shall "interfere with them, their preachers are only under the Board. The "internal government of the society is under an administration of "the Society of the Jewish Christians, consisting of two superiors "and four adjuncts, chosen by the society from its own members, and "confirmed by the Board. It manages the internal concerns, the "Police, &c. has a particular seal; it may expel improper members "and receive new ones, but must report on this to the Board. The "members of the Society obtain the rights of citizens in the Russian "empire. He may carry on trade at home, and also abroad, con-"formably to the general laws, establish manufactories, &c. without "being registered in any Guild. In their settlements the Society may "brew beer, distil brandy, &c. They are free from billeting of troops

"and for twenty years from taxes, are not bound to military services, "&c. Foreign Jews, who after embracing Christianity join such a com- "munity, may leave the country when they have paid their debts and "the legal contributions for three years on the capitals which they "have acquired in Russia. This regulation excites the more attention, "because it is well known that our Ambassadors in Germany are "expressly ordered to give no more passports to those who desire to "emigrate."

It also appears by a letter from Dr. Naudi, of Malta, published in the Jewish Expositor for February last, that a Mr. Murtheim, a Jew, converted to Christianity by means of the London Jewish Society, and many others, are employed in promoting the conversion of that people in different parts of Africa and Asia. Upon the whole, therefore, there seems sufficient evidence to justify the inference, *that the national conversion of the Jews has actually commenced.*

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER OF THE APOCALYPSE.

"And I looked, and lo a Lamb stood on the "Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty "and four thousand, having his Father's name "written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice "from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as "the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the "voice of harpers, harping with their harps: and "they sung as it were a new song before the throne, "and before the four living creatures and the elders; "and no man could learn that song, but the hundred "and forty and four thousand which were redeemed "from the earth. These are they which were not "defiled with women, for they are virgins; these "are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he "goeth; these were redeemed from among men, "being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb; "and in their mouth was found no guile, for they "are without fault."

In the interpretation of this passage, I am compelled to differ from most expositors of the Apocalypse. Bishop Newton and Mr. Faber both apply the vision of the Lamb with the one hundred and forty-four thousand, to the state of the true spiritual church during the reign of the beast. "After this melancholy account of the rise and reign "of the beast, the spirit of prophecy delineates, by "way of opposition, the state of the true church

" during the same period, its struggles and contests " with the beast, and the judgments of God upon its " enemies." *

" By these one hundred and forty-four thousand, " I understand peculiarly *the depressed church in " the wilderness* previous to the time *of the refor- " mation.*" †

Believing that both the above writers have erred in their view of this vision, I remark that their mistake (if it be one) is a natural consequence of their erroneous explanation of the sixth seal. They apply that seal, and the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, mentioned in the seventh chapter, to the revolution in the time of Constantine, and the peace of the church which was consequential thereto. They therefore consider this mystical number of one hundred and forty-four thousand, as continuing to represent the true church from the times of Constantine to the dawn of the millenium. Archdeacon Woodhouse has adopted the same explanation of this vision. In so doing, however, he certainly seems very inconsistent with himself. The learned Archdeacon, as we have seen, applies the earthquake of the sixth seal to the great revolution which precedes the establishment of the reign of the Messiah; and he interprets the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, in the seventh chapter, to signify the preservation of the righteous in the great day of the Lord: and yet he unaccountably supposes the one hundred and forty-four

* Bishop Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, *in loco.*

† Faber's Dissertation on the 1260 years, chap. x. sect. 5.

thousand in the fourteenth chapter, having the name of the Father written on their foreheads, (which is the same as their being sealed with the seal of the living God) to denote the true persecuted and suffering Christian church, which, throughout the reign of the dragon, the beast and false prophet, refuses to worship the image, and receive the mark of the beast.

Now it is evident, that if the sixth seal refers to the mighty revolution, which is to usher in the great day of the Lord; and if the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand does not take place till the period of the sixth seal, then the vision of the fourteenth chapter, which exhibits them to us as *already sealed*, cannot relate to a time which is prior to the opening of the sixth seal, *i. e.* to the time when they were sealed. The contrary supposition includes in it a positive contradiction. It makes the one hundred and forty-four thousand to be sealed, and not sealed, at one and the same time. As I have followed Archdeacon Woodhouse in his interpretation of the great earthquake of the sixth seal, and of the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand in the seventh chapter, I must also, in consistency with that interpretation, refer the vision of the Lamb with the one hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Sion, to the period of the sixth seal, and of the seventh trumpet and seven vials, which are synchronical with that seal.

In effect, the description given in the passage before us, of the state of these followers of the Lamb, does not at all agree with the condition of the church during the reign of the beast.

At that time the church is symbolized by two witnesses clothed in sackcloth, the garb of mourning. She is also represented as being fled into a secret retreat in the wilderness, where she is concealed from the face of the serpent that seeks to destroy her. On the contrary, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, in this passage, stand upon Mount Sion, a station of the most conspicuous elevation, and the most opposite to a state of concealment in the wilderness which can well be imagined. The voices heard by the apostle from heaven, like the noise of many waters, and of thunder, and the voice of harpers playing on their harps, are also the emblems of triumphant songs of thanksgiving, which it were quite incongruous to suppose applicable to the condition of the depressed church in the wilderness before the reformation. There is mention made of voices in heaven, in three other passages of this mysterious book, but they are all indicative of the triumphs of the church. The first place, in the order of chronology, is on the fall of Satan from heaven to the earth, and the victory of Michael; * the second is at the sounding of the seventh trumpet; † the third is on the destruction of Babylon.‡ Now to suppose the same voices to mark a condition of the deepest depression, and one of the most exalted triumph, is to introduce contradiction and confusion into the symbolical style.

This passage then is to be considered as belonging to the sixth seal, and as immediately connected with the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand in the seventh chapter, according to the

* Rev. xiii. 10. † Rev. xi. 15. ‡ Rev. xix. 1. 6.

excellent rule laid down by Mr. Fraser, whereby we are to discover the connecting links between the different visions. In considering the seventh chapter, I endeavoured to prove that sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, indicated the security and final salvation of the true church during the awful convulsions of the great earthquake. Their appearance with the Lamb on Mount Sion in the present vision, is emblematical of the triumphant attitude assumed by the true spiritual church, in the days of the seventh trumpet and seven vials, to which the whole of the chapter we are now considering belongs. These followers of the Lamb are represented to us as possessing the features of character which most eminently distinguish his disciples, and as listening to and catching the immortal sounds of the triumphant anthem sung by the multitude of voices in heaven, which none could learn but themselves, the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

What are the words of this song is not here declared; but it is manifestly the same with the song of Moses and the Lamb, mentioned in the following chapter, which belongs to the same Apocalyptic period, namely, that of the seventh trumpet and seven vials. The distinguishing feature of this song is evidently a spiritual discernment of the nature, purpose, and end of the dreadful and desolating judgments of God during the period of the seventh trumpet and seven vials; and a joyful and triumphant anticipation of the glorious reign of the once crucified, but now returning Messiah, which shall immediately succeed the vials. Hence we see the

reason why none could learn that song, but the one hundred and forty-four thousand, for none can discover the nature and end of the judgments of God, or discern the signs of the times, but they who are followers of the Lamb, and taught by the Holy Ghost.

It is not, however, to be inferred from the attitude and employment of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, that during this time the members of the true church shall be exempted from suffering. It is a period of universal tribulation, and in this fiery trial they also must expect to participate, and in it to be purified and made white.* But though, as men, they will suffer many things; the church, as a body, shall be saved. Placed high on the towering eminence of Mount Sion, she shall hear the thunders of God's judgments, and see the storms of divine wrath which desolate the earth rolling beneath her feet.

To sum up the whole of this passage, the church is here presented to us as returned from the wilderness, but not yet entered into rest; yet joyfully anticipating the near approach of her rest, which shall be ushered in by the marriage supper of the Lamb. Like Moses on Mount Pisgah, she beholds the wide extent of the land flowing with milk and honey, which she shortly is destined to possess.

The church already appears to be assuming, or

* The concluding part of the period of the vials, we have reason to believe, will be peculiarly trying. To that awful hour our Lord's words may be applicable: "He that will save his life shall lose it, and "he that will lose his life shall save it." Perhaps there may be some things of a peculiarly sifting nature, which shall distinguish between the true and false Christian.

rather to have assumed, the posture here mentioned.* The evidences of her having returned from the wilderness were mentioned in a former chapter; and in the increasing discernment of the signs of the times, in the joyful anticipation of her approaching triumphs over the powers of darkness, which we everywhere meet with among eminently spiritual believers, are to be seen the evidences of her having begun to learn the song of Moses and the Lamb: "Great and marvellous are thy works, "O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy "ways, thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear "thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name? for thou "only art holy: for all nations shall come and "worship before thee, for thy judgments are made "manifest." †

The next clause of the prophecy announces a preaching of the Gospel, which seems to correspond in character, with that mentioned by our Lord as immediately preceding the end.‡

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of "heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every "nation and kindred, and tongue and people: say-"ing with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory "to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: "and worship him that made heaven and earth, and "the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there

* The mystical number of 144,000 is indeed not yet completed; but it is represented as complete by way of prolepsis, as it will actually be filled up during the prophetical hour to which the vision has reference.

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"followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, "is fallen, that great city, because she made all "nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her "fornication. And the third angel followed them, "saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the "beast, and his image, and receive his mark in his "forehead, or his hand; the same shall drink of the "wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out "without mixture into the cup of his indignation; "and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the "presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their "torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and "they have no rest, day nor night, who worship the "beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the "mark of his name."

The above passage is, by some interpreters, supposed to relate to the period of the reformation, and to have been fulfilled in the preaching of Luther, and the other eminent persons who were raised up at that time to expose the errors of the Romish church. Others, as Mede and Bishop Newton, refer it to an earlier period. But it appears to me, that there are insuperable objections to these interpretations. The first angel is instrumental in preaching the Gospel much more extensively than the reformers could do. So far were they from preaching to all the inhabitants of the earth, that they did not even preach through the whole of Christian Europe. The reformation was not permitted to enter into some of the most extensive kingdoms of the Romish jurisdiction. It was entirely excluded from Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

Neither could it be said, in consistence with truth, at the time of the reformation, that "the hour of "God's judgment was come." There is nothing indefinite in the language of the Apocalypse. The hour of God's judgment is a time well known, and exactly defined in the chronological prophecies of Daniel and John. It is the period of the judgment mentioned in Dan. vii. 26, when the little horn, or the papacy, is deprived of its power. It is likewise the time of the seventh trumpet, and seven vials, in the Apocalypse, when God judgeth Babylon,* and destroyeth them who destroy the earth.†

The expressions used by the second angel are no less inapplicable to the time of the reformation. It was not true that Babylon the Great was then fallen; on the contrary, after the first fervour of the reformation subsided, the church of Rome regained much of the ground which she had lost, and even down to the period of the French revolution, she continued to say in her heart, "*I sit a queen, and am no "widow, and shall see no sorrow.*" ‡

The above reasons seem to me sufficient to justify my rejecting the common interpretation of this part of the Apocalypse. The fact is, that as the vision of the one hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Sion, belongs to the period of the seventh trumpet, so the whole remaining part of the fourteenth chapter is to be referred to the same Apocalyptic season. The flight of the first angel represents a preaching of the Gospel much more universal than any that preceded it. In the symbolical language of this book, that which is effected in the

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"and for twenty years from taxes, are not bound to military services, "&c. Foreign Jews, who after embracing Christianity join such a com-"munity, may leave the country when they have paid their debts and "the legal contributions for three years on the capitals which they "have acquired in Russia. This regulation excites the more attention, "because it is well known that our Ambassadors in Germany are "expressly ordered to give no more passports to those who desire to "emigrate."

It also appears by a letter from Dr. Naudi, of Malta, published in the Jewish Expositor for February last, that a Mr. Murtheim, a Jew, converted to Christianity by means of the London Jewish Society, and many others, are employed in promoting the conversion of that people in different parts of Africa and Asia. Upon the whole, therefore, there seems sufficient evidence to justify the inference, *that the national conversion of the Jews has actually commenced.*

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER OF THE APOCALYPSE.

"And I looked, and lo a Lamb stood on the "Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty "and four thousand, having his Father's name "written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice "from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as "the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the "voice of harpers, harping with their harps: and "they sung as it were a new song before the throne, "and before the four living creatures and the elders; "and no man could learn that song, but the hundred "and forty and four thousand which were redeemed "from the earth. These are they which were not "defiled with women, for they are virgins; these "are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he "goeth; these were redeemed from among men, "being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb; "and in their mouth was found no guile, for they "are without fault."

In the interpretation of this passage, I am compelled to differ from most expositors of the Apocalypse. Bishop Newton and Mr. Faber both apply the vision of the Lamb with the one hundred and forty-four thousand, to the state of the true spiritual church during the reign of the beast. "After this melancholy account of the rise and reign "of the beast, the spirit of prophecy delineates, by "way of opposition, the state of the true church

" during the same period, its struggles and contests " with the beast, and the judgments of God upon its " enemies." *

" By these one hundred and forty-four thousand, " I understand peculiarly *the depressed church in " the wilderness* previous to the time *of the refor- " mation.*" †

Believing that both the above writers have erred in their view of this vision, I remark that their mistake (if it be one) is a natural consequence of their erroneous explanation of the sixth seal. They apply that seal, and the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, mentioned in the seventh chapter, to the revolution in the time of Constantine, and the peace of the church which was consequential thereto. They therefore consider this mystical number of one hundred and forty-four thousand, as continuing to represent the true church from the times of Constantine to the dawn of the millenium. Archdeacon Woodhouse has adopted the same explanation of this vision. In so doing, however, he certainly seems very inconsistent with himself. The learned Archdeacon, as we have seen, applies the earthquake of the sixth seal to the great revolution which precedes the establishment of the reign of the Messiah; and he interprets the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, in the seventh chapter, to signify the preservation of the righteous in the great day of the Lord: and yet he unaccountably supposes the one hundred and forty-four

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thousand in the fourteenth chapter, having the name of the Father written on their foreheads, (which is the same as their being sealed with the seal of the living God) to denote the true persecuted and suffering Christian church, which, throughout the reign of the dragon, the beast and false prophet, refuses to worship the image, and receive the mark of the beast.

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The next clause of the prophecy announces a preaching of the Gospel, which seems to correspond in character, with that mentioned by our Lord as immediately preceding the end.‡

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of "heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every "nation and kindred, and tongue and people: say-"ing with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory "to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: "and worship him that made heaven and earth, and "the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there

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The expressions used by the second angel are no less inapplicable to the time of the reformation. It was not true that Babylon the Great was then fallen; on the contrary, after the first fervour of the reformation subsided, the church of Rome regained much of the ground which she had lost, and even down to the period of the French revolution, she continued to say in her heart, "*I sit a queen, and am no "widow, and shall see no sorrow.*"‡

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providence of God by various instruments, is said to be done by an angel going forth to execute it. I do not conceive, therefore, that in this passage we are to view the angel, as being the representative of any individual minister, but of a series of events in the church, which are accomplished by her collective energies. It is remarkable that this angel goes forth, not preaching by word of mouth only, but having the everlasting Gospel, (*i. e.* the book of the Gospel), the scriptures of truth, in his hand. We may suppose, therefore, that this not only signifies an extensive promulgation of the word, in the common use of the term *preaching*, but likewise that it points out the diffusion of the *written word* throughout the world, in a manner and with a rapidity before unexampled; and that this circulation of the scriptures shall be accompanied, in the adorable and wonder-working providence of God, with such awful and signal judgments of the Almighty, as shall be calculated to strike terror into the minds of all nations, and shall in effect call out to them with a voice louder than thunder, "Fear God, and give "glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." This interesting prophecy seems now to be receiving its accomplishment, and will probably continue to be fulfilled with increasing clearness during the remainder of the period into which we have entered. We have witnessed a more extensive preaching of the Gospel than has taken place before, since the days of the apostles of the Lord, and have seen the formation of a society for the printing and circulation of the inspired volume, which has already given a new impetus to the moral universe, and continues to

advance with gigantic strides to universal empire. The scriptures are now printing in more languages than were spoken on the day of Pentecost, and the time seems to be at hand, when all the ends of the earth shall be visited with the healing waters of salvation. We have also seen this preaching of the Gospel, and distribution of the word, accompanied with a series of the most awful and tremendous judgments, which have spoken to us in the loudest manner, calling on us to "*fear God, and give glory* "*to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.*"

The flight of the *second angel* to declare the fall of Babylon seems to be still future, and of consequence also the preaching of the third angel. The second angel is evidently the same with the one mentioned at the beginning of the eighteenth chapter, who comes down from heaven, and cries aloud, that Babylon is fallen. The correspondence of the two passages is to be considered as one of those internal marks which serve to denote a chronological coincidence. The *third angel* seems to go forth about the same time that the apostle hears the voice from heaven (ch. xviii. 4) saying, "Come "out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of "her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The purpose of the mission of the third angel is indeed not exactly the same with what is thus said by the voice from heaven; the one declares what is the nature of the plagues which shall be inflicted on the worshippers of the beast and his image, and the other exhorts the disciples of Christ (and it is the *final* exhortation) to forsake the communion of Babylon: but I think the two are synchronical,

because they both immediately succeed the proclamation of the fall of Babylon.

The going forth of the second and third angels being thus future, it does not become us to form conjectures as to the manner in which this vision shall be accomplished, whether by the preaching of living ministers, or by the louder and more awful voice of the divine judgments, accomplishing the fall of Babylon, and proclaiming aloud the awful punishment awaiting the worshippers of the beast. The great city Babylon is evidently *falling;* and though the voice is not yet gone forth that she is *fallen,* if we may reason from the analogy of what has passed on the great theatre of the world, during the last twenty years, her utter fall cannot be far off.

After declaring the purport of the message of the third angel, which seems immediately to precede the final destruction of the beast, in the awful day of Armageddon, the Holy Spirit gives the following significant warning that the events of that time shall call into full exercise the utmost degree of patience and faith in the disciples of Christ. "Here is the "patience of the saints: here are they that keep "the commandments of God, and faith of Jesus." The day of the final destruction of the beast and false prophet, is the same which is, in chap. xvi. 14. called "the great day of God Almighty." This day will to the Christian world be even more awful and tremendous than the day of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem was to the Jewish nation. As the believing Jews were delivered from that destruction, so shall the true disciples of Christ be saved in the day of Armageddon: yet their salvation

shall be in such a way as that of Noah from the deluge, and of Lot from Sodom, *i. e.* through the exercise of faith and patience. "They shall indeed "be accounted worthy to escape those things which "shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of "Man." * But it is not easy to say what previous fiery trials they may be called upon to endure, in order "to purge them and make them white unto "the end;" † and "that the trial of their faith, "being much more precious than of gold that "perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honour, "and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." ‡ The above warning to the church, of the great need of patience and faith at this trying hour, seems evidently to coincide with the declaration in chap. xiii. 10. and the concluding clause of the verse, "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints;" and in considering that clause, I supposed it to refer to the awful time when the beast should be slain by the sword, as is mentioned in the former part of the verse. The two passages are therefore synchronical.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto "me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the "Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that "they may rest from their labours, and their works "do follow them."

In the preceding passage, the dreadful end of the worshippers of the beast and his image was shown; here, by way of contrast, is declared the blessedness of those who die in the Lord. Such seems to be the practical sense of the passage; but it has doubtless

* Luke xxi. 36. † Dan. xi. 35. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 9.

also a prophetical signification, and points out to us, in connection with what precedes and follows, that now at length the church is about to enter into that glorious state of rest which was promised by the mouth of all the holy prophets. Babylon being fallen, and the beast slain, as is declared in the context; the long expected year of jubilee is arrived: the resurrection of those who had been slain for the testimony of Jesus, and who had not worshipped the beast or his image, is now about to take place; they are to live and reign with Christ a thousand years:* *from henceforth,* therefore, they are emphatically pronounced blessed. Such seems to me the most probable interpretation of this very obscure and difficult passage; but as it is new, I offer it with that diffidence which it becomes us to exercise in the exposition of this mysterious book. This explanation is, however, quite agreeable to the analogy of scripture; for we learn from the prophecies of Daniel, that as soon as the fourth beast is slain, the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom: † and in like manner, in the Apocalypse, no sooner is the beast, and with him the false prophet, cast into the lake of fire, than Satan is bound, and the first resurrection takes place.‡

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and "upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, "having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand "a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of "the temple, crying with a loud voice, to him that "sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap;

* Rev. xx. 4. † Dan. vii. 17—22.
‡ Rev. xix. 19—21; xx. 1—4.

"for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that "sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; "and the earth was reaped."

The coming of the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven, or, as Luke expresses it, with a cloud, is an event frequently mentioned in the scriptures. It occurs in the prophecies of Daniel,* and in our Lord's discourse concerning the destruction of Jerusalem.† It is also predicted at the beginning of the Apocalypse.‡ This advent of Christ seems evidently to be intended in the passage before us. The symbolical reaping of the harvest of the earth, which is performed by our Lord, I consider to signify the gathering together of his elect from the four winds of heaven, which he himself assures us, shall take place immediately on his advent with the clouds of heaven.§ The action of reaping is in the Gospels more than once used as a symbol of the gathering in of Christ's elect;‖ but never, so far as I remember, as a symbol of the execution of divine judgments. The gathering of the elect, here predicted under the image of reaping a harvest of corn or wheat, immediately precedes the harvest of the vintage, (mentioned in the following verses), which is every where in the prophetical writings used as a symbol of the wrath of God.¶ This gathering of the elect is accordingly also alluded to in chap. xix. where a more full description of the vintage is given; the allusion to it is in the 9th verse, "Blessed are "they which are called unto the marriage supper of

* Dan. vii. 13. † Matt. xxiv. 30. Mark xiii. 26. Luke xxi. 27. ‡ Rev. i. 7. § Vide Matt. xxiv. 31, and the parallel passage of Mark. ‖ John vi. 35—38. ¶ Isai. lxiii. 2, 3. Joel iii. 13.

"the Lamb." The call given to the marriage supper, is probably the same as the gathering together of the elect. In what manner it will be accomplished, it were presumptuous for us to conjecture: the event only will show.

In the above explanation of the symbolical wheat harvest, I entirely differ from Mede, Bishop Newton, and other writers, and also from Mr. Faber, whose reasons for his own opinion may be found in his Dissertation on the Twelve Hundred and Sixty Years. I have, however, the happiness to coincide with the eminently learned Bishop Horsley, who applies the harvest, as I do, to the gathering of the elect, mentioned by our Lord as taking place upon his advent with the clouds of heaven.

"And another angel came out of the temple, "which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. "And another angel came out from the altar, which "had power over fire; and cried with a loud voice "to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust "in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the "vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, "and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into "the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And "the wine-press was trodden without the city, and "blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the "horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six "hundred furlongs."

I think, with Mr. Faber, that the treading of the wine-press, predicted in this vision, is the same with that mentioned in chap. xix. where the Almighty Word of God is represented to us, as

treading the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. It takes place when the beast and false prophet, and kings of the earth, are gathered to the battle of that great day of God Almighty at Armageddon.* It is the same with the dreadful destruction of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat, mentioned by Joel in his last chapter; and I agree with the above learned writer, that the scene of this awful catastrophe is to be in Judea. The same events are also predicted in the prophecies of Isaiah; particularly in that vision where he sees the Redeemer coming from Edom, with garments dyed in the blood of his enemies, after having trodden the wine-press.† But I shall defer the further consideration of this subject till we come to the effusion of the vials of wrath.

In reviewing the fourteenth chapter I have thus endeavoured to show, that it refers wholly to the period of the sixth seal and seventh trumpet, and contains a general account of the state of the church during that time; of a great and unusual promulgation of the Gospel, which is then to take place; and of the warnings which are to be given of the fall of Babylon, and the awful punishment which awaits the worshippers of the beast and his image. It then goes on to state the second advent of our Lord with the clouds of heaven, the gathering-in of his elect, and the treading of the wine-press of the wrath of God in the day of Armageddon. But for this chapter we should have had no account of the state of things in the church between the time of her emerging from the wilderness, and the

* Rev. xvi. 14. 16. † Isai. lxiii. 1—6.

period when she shall be publicly acknowledged by her Lord at the marriage of the Lamb. This chapter, as now explained, therefore supplies an important want in the Apocalyptic history; for, according to the systems of most writers whose works I have had access to, it does not appear what becomes of the church after she returns from her secret retreat in the wilderness, till she is exhibited to us in the nineteenth chapter, as having made herself ready for the bridal ceremony.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VISION OF SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN VIALS OF WRATH.

"And I saw another sign in heaven, great and
"marvellous, seven angels having the seven last
"plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of
"God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled
"with fire; and them that had gotten the victory
"over the beast, and over his image, and over his
"mark, and over the number of his name, stand on
"the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And
"they sing the song of Moses the servant of God,
"and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and
"marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty,
"just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints.
"Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy
"name? For thou only art holy; for all nations
"shall come and worship before thee; for thy judg-
"ments are made manifest. And after that I looked,
"and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the
"testimony in heaven was opened; and the seven
"angels came out of the temple, having the seven
"plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and
"having their breasts girded with golden girdles.
"And one of the four living creatures gave unto the
"seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath
"of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the
"temple was filled with smoke from the glory of
"God and from his power: and no man was able

"to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of "the seven angels were fulfilled."

The fifteenth chapter of the Apocalypse is an introduction to the prophecy of the seven vials of wrath, and it contains some marks whereby we are enabled to assign to the vials their proper place in the Apocalyptic visions. The scene of this passage is evidently in heaven. Those who had overcome the beast and his image, are seen by the apostle standing upon a sea of glass mingled with fire. This is in allusion to the brazen sea in the temple of Solomon, and is the same sea exhibited to John when he was at first caught up into heaven.* The glass of this sea is probably a symbol denoting the atoning and purifying blood of Christ, in which all who overcome must wash their robes, and make them white.† The fire with which the glass is mingled, denotes the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, which are usually signified by the symbol of fire. Thus John the Baptist says to the Jews, "I indeed baptize you with "water unto repentance: but he that cometh after "me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not "worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the "Holy Ghost and fire." In Acts ii. 2, 3, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles of our Lord was announced by "a sound from heaven, as of a mighty "rushing wind,"—"and there appeared unto them

* Rev. iv. 6.

† "There may be also a more mystical meaning of this sea "mingled with fire, the Spirit with the blood of Christ." Dr. H. More's Works, p. 659.

"cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each "of them."

From the passage thus explained we learn, that they who overcome the beast and his image do yet stand before the throne of God, not on the ground of their own obedience, but only in virtue of their being cleansed by the atoning blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. They are represented as having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, the words of which have already been considered. These are certainly the heavenly harpers, the voice of whose harps was heard by the apostle in the preceding chapter; and they represent the church triumphant in heaven, or rather that portion of it which had been found faithful unto death during the peculiar time of trial, the reign of the beast. There is a beautiful fitness, in this part of the church triumphant being introduced on the scene of this mysterious prophecy, in the posture and employment here described; for the period is now come when the beast and his image, in whose reign they had fought, and bled, and conquered, are to be destroyed for ever; and their blood is thus to be avenged. Hence they are, with inimitable beauty, described as leading the chorus of the triumphant anthem, which shall in due time be re-echoed from the church militant on earth, and shall swell into louder, and yet louder strains of praise, till at length it shall be heard "as it were the "voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of "many waters, and as the voice of mighty thun-"derings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God Omni-

"potent reigneth."* The song of the harpers is carried on through the whole period of the seven vials.

After hearing the words of the song, the apostle immediately saw the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony opened in heaven. This denotes the opening of the holy of holies, or innermost sanctuary, in which was the ark of the testimony; by which internal mark we learn that this passage synchronizes with chap. xi. 19. where the temple is also opened; and as this was not done till after the seventh angel sounded, we may hence conclude with absolute certainty that the seven vials all belong to the period of the seventh trumpet, and are the constituent parts of the third woe: for no sooner is the temple opened than the apostle sees the seven angels coming out of it, having the seven plagues. They are clothed with pure and white linen, to denote the righteousness of the dreadful judgments which they are to inflict; and their breasts are girded with golden girdles, to signify their constant readiness to fulfil the behests of the Most High. The whole ceremonial of this awful vision is adjusted in such a manner as is calculated to fill the mind with holy fear; and to show that the dreadful judgments symbolized by the vials, are inflicted by the immediate hand of God, one of the four living creatures, or cherubim, nearest to the throne, gives unto the seven angels seven golden vials, or bowls, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

In a former part of this work, I have endeavoured

* Rev. xix. 6.

to prove, that the different compartments of the temple were symbolical of the several conditions and states of the church; and that the holy of holies, besides being a symbol of heaven, is also a figure of that future and most glorious state of the church on earth when the tabernacle of God shall be with men. Now the opening of the holy of holies, which we have seen to take place in the passage we are considering, denotes the near approach of that blessed period, and might have been supposed to signify its actual commencement, if nothing had been said to the contrary. But to prevent this mistake, we are informed, at the close of the passage, that "the "temple was filled with smoke from the glory of "God, and from his power: and no man was able "to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of "the seven angels were fulfilled, or were about to "be finished." By this we may understand, that the above glorious state of the church, which is symbolized by men entering the holy of holies, shall not commence till the end of the vials, *i. e.* till the treading of the wine-press in the day of Armageddon. The fact seems to be, that the church of Christ must be purified by judgment before she is fitted for the glorious rest then prepared for her; and accordingly we learn, in another part of the scriptures, that when Christ takes his fan into his hand, he will thoroughly purge his floor, and separate the chaff from the wheat, before he gathers the wheat into his garner.* The above opening of the holy

* Matthew iii. 12.—I am always happy to support my opinions by the very respectable authority of Bishop Horsley. That learned

of holies denotes, as I have mentioned before, the beginning of the return of the church from the wilderness. The entering of men into the holy of holies takes place when the elect of Christ are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

writer, in his Commentary on the Eighteenth of Isaiah, says, that "God, immediately before the final gathering of his elect from the "four winds of heaven, will purify his church by such signal judg-"ments as shall rouse the attention of the whole world, and in the "end strike all nations with religious awe."

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EFFUSION OF THE VIALS.

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple,
"saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and
"pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the
"earth. And the first went, and poured out his
"vial upon the earth: and there fell a noisome and
"grievous sore upon the men which had the mark
"of the beast, and upon them which worshipped
"his image. And the second angel poured out his
"vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of
"a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.
"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the
"rivers and fountains of waters; and they became
"blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say,
"Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast,
"and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus: for
"they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
"and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they
"are worthy. And I heard another, out of the
"altar, say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true
"and righteous are thy judgments. And the fourth
"angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and
"power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.
"And men were scorched with great heat, and
"blasphemed the name of God, which hath power
"over these plagues; and they repented not, to
"give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out
"his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his
"kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed

"their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God
"of heaven, because of their pains and their sores,
"and repented not of their deeds. And the sixth
"angel poured out his vial upon the great river
"Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up,
"that the way of the kings of the east might be
"prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits, like
"frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and
"out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the
"mouth of the false prophet: for they are the
"spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth
"unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world,
"to gather them to the battle of that great day of
"God Almighty. Behold I come as a thief. Blessed
"is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments,
"lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And
"he gathered them together into a place, called in
"the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh
"angel poured out his vial into the air; and there
"came a great voice out of the temple of heaven,
"from the throne, saying, It is done; and there
"were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and
"there was a great earthquake, such as was not
"since men were upon the earth, so mighty an
"earthquake and so great. And the great city was
"divided into three parts, and the cities of the
"nations fell; and Great Babylon came in remem-
"brance before God, to give unto her the cup of
"the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And
"every island fled away, and the mountains were
"not found. And there fell upon men a great hail
"out of heaven, every stone about the weight of
"a talent; and men blasphemed God, because of

"the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof "was exceeding great."*

When the seventh angel sounds, we are briefly informed of the great result which takes place under that trumpet, viz. that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. But we are also told that the wrath of God is then come, and the time to destroy them which destroy the earth.† The nature of that awful wrath of God, and the various steps of this destruction, are pointed out to us in the seven vials of wrath.

As we know from the prophecies of Daniel and St. John, that the last power which opposes itself to the kingdom of Christ, is the Roman empire in its ultimate state, secular and spiritual, it must be that this empire is the principal subject of these vials of wrath. But as the restoration of the Jews is also to take place before the establishment of the kingdom of God in the world, and the Turkish empire still occupies the Holy Land; and as this empire is now almost the only remaining prop and stay of the false religion of Mahummud, it would seem that the removal of the Ottoman power is not less necessary than that of the Roman empire. Accordingly the sixth vial, which is poured out upon the great river Euphrates, is applied to the destruction of the Ottoman empire by our most respectable expositors, with whom I entirely coincide in so interpreting it.

The seven vials being the component parts of the third woe, or seventh trumpet, as it has been shown that the seventh trumpet sounded in the year, 1792,‡ it follows that the vials of wrath began to be poured

* Rev. xvi. 1. † Rev. xi. 15—18. ‡ Page 135—137.

out at the same period. Hence it is, that the interpretation of the vials is attended with that peculiar sort of difficulty which arises from their only being in part accomplished.

In the first verse the whole of the seven angels are commanded to pour out their vials on "*the* "*earth.*" We may therefore conclude, from what has been said before, that this earth is a symbol denoting the whole extent of the Roman empire, and including Turkey. Further, by comparing the first verse with the remainder of the chapter, we discover that the earth on which the vials were poured was a complete symbolical world, having dry land, a sea, rivers and fountains, a sun, air or an atmosphere, cities, mountains, islands: each of which subordinate symbols must have an appropriate signification. And as the vials began to be poured out in the year 1792, the hieroglyphical universe seen by the apostle must have exhibited the Roman empire as it existed at that period.

As the seven angels all came out of the temple at the same time, and the apostle "heard a great voice "out of the temple, saying," not to the first angel only, but "to the seven angels, Go and pour out "the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth," I am of opinion that the whole of the seven vials began to be poured out at one and the same period; and that instead of following each other in chronological succession, they are synchronical in all their extent. I shall afterwards offer some arguments in support of this opinion; in the meanwhile I proceed to the consideration of the several vials.

The first vial was poured out upon the earth or

dry land, and was followed by a noisome and grievous sore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and who worshipped his image. In the language of symbols, a noisome sore signifies a grievous moral taint or disorder. In this sense the word is frequently used by the inspired writers of the Old Testament. Speaking of the dreadful depravity of the Jewish church and nation, Isaiah describes it under the emblem of grievous wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, covering them from the sole of the foot even to the head.* God, in Jeremiah, speaking of the false prophets, says, "They have "healed the hurt of the daughter of my people "slightly, saying, Peace, peace, where there is no "peace."† The hurt or sore here spoken of is evidently a moral one, which the false prophets were guilty of glossing over, instead of bringing it home to the consciences of the Jews, and exhorting them to turn from their sin.

The earth or dry land on which the first vial is poured, seems to signify symbolically the empire of the beast in general, and that part of it in particular which worshipped the image of the beast, or was in communion with the corrupt church of Rome.‡ Mr. Faber interprets the sore which follows from

* Isaiah i. 6. † Jer. vi. 14.

‡ I must here remark, that there are many worshippers of the beast and his image, even among protestants. Carnal, worldly-minded Christians, of whatever denomination, all who secularize the pure and heavenly religion of the Gospel, professing to believe it, not because it has God for its author, but because it is the religion of the state, are in effect worshippers of the beast. Let all such persons beware, lest they continue in this dangerous state, for the end of it, if unrepentedof, is destr uction.

this vial to signify the *delusive spirit of atheism*, or the denial of the Father and the Son, which in so awful a manner marked the earlier stages of the French revolution. I think this interpretation is substantially correct; yet I am inclined to suppose, that not only the atheism of the French revolutionists is here intended, but likewise those principles of anarchy and insubordination, and want of natural affection, which accompanied the avowal of atheism, and into which spirit all the nations of Europe so fearfully drank at the era of the French revolution. That the present period of the world has been marked, above every preceding one, for the bold avowal of such principles, will not be denied by any person who has carefully studied the moral history of his own times. The spirit of irreligion and contempt of lawful authority still continues to work, and even this highly privileged country is not without evidence of the widely extended influence of this accursed leaven. On the continent these dreadful principles have had their full sway, and in the devoted country of France and its immediate dependencies, they have at length produced a degree of moral turpitude, perhaps unequalled hitherto in the history of our species. The conduct of the French soldiery in the invasions of Portugal and Russia, and the war in Spain, may be called upon to bear witness to this charge. The awful, and wanton, and horrid cruelties committed, particularly during their different retreats, seem to mark the French armies as consisting rather of incarnate fiends than men professing Christianity.

We may further remark, that it was the prevalence

of the spirit of revolution and infidelity in all the countries overrun by the French armies, which facilitated the progress of their arms, and enabled them to burst through and overwhelm the barriers erected by the policy of ages, and cemented by the blood of the nations of Europe, against the undue aggrandizement of any particular state. It was these principles, even more than the numbers and discipline, and science of the French armies, which delivered up the hapless countries around them to a tyranny more dreadful than that of ancient Rome.

I have heard it objected to the foregoing explanation of the first vial, that atheism and infidelity existed long before the era of the French revolution, and that therefore it is wrong to state them as then first coming into operation. To this it may be replied, that before that awful event, the revolution in France, these principles did indeed exist *individually*, or in individuals, but not *nationally*; they were never before acted upon by any nation as a body politic: but now they came into political existence; they were avowed and brought into active operation by the government of the largest and central nation of Christendom. To use the style of symbols; before the revolution, the poisonous humours of atheism and insubordination were secretly working in the mass of the body politic, but it was then only that these humours broke out into a loathsome, unsightly, ulcerated sore.*

These principles of irreligion and insubordination have been the germ and fruitful source of all the

* For this excellent simile I am indebted to Mr. Faber.

fearful calamities which have already overwhelmed Europe under the third woe. There is therefore an inimitable beauty and propriety in the vial which developes these principles being placed first. It is however but too apparent that the influence of this vial is not yet past.

The second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead man, &c. The collective body of the symbolical waters signify the whole body of nations, and multitudes, and peoples, and tongues of the Roman earth.* Every distinct body of water, therefore, when the empire is in a divided state, (as it has always been since the invasion of the Goths and Vandals), must symbolize a particular nation; and the symbolical sea, as being the greatest body of waters, naturally signifies the greatest and most numerous people of the Roman world, which is without dispute the French nation.† This nation, at the period of the revolution, became drenched in its own blood, and the whole territory of France was converted into a vast slaughter-house. It has been computed that two millions of men perished in that devoted country within three years after it became a republic.‡ Long after the revolutionary massacres had ceased, French blood still continued to flow in torrents; and from the accession of Napoleon to the consular and imperial

* See Rev. xvii. 15.

† The reader is requested to turn back to the remarks, with respect to the proportion of the symbols, in pp. 73 and 74.

‡ Kett's History the Interpreter of Prophecy, vol. ii. chap. 3.—Another account of the loss of lives in France during the three years from 1792 to 1795 inclusive, which is before me, makes it amount to more than 2,000,000.

powers, till his overthrow by the combined forces of Europe, it successively fertilized the soil of every country from the banks of the Tagus to the deserts of Poland and European Russia, in the series of dreadful wars carried on to glut the ambition of a ferocious usurper. In particular, during the late awful campaigns in Russia, Germany, and France, this and the following vial have received a fearful accomplishment, in a destruction of the human race without example in the annals of modern times.

The third vial was poured out upon the rivers and fountains of water. As the sea, the great body of the waters, symbolizes the greatest nation of the Roman earth; in like manner, the rivers and fountains of waters, must signify the other nations, viz. Germany divided into many states, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, &c. All these nations have since the French revolution drank deeply of the cup of blood put into their hands by the third angel. Spain only, as I have heard from an officer who served some years in the Spanish armies, lost two millions of her inhabitants in her contest with Bonaparte. How dreadful also has been the effusion of blood in the different wars between France and Austria and Prussia, in the late contests between France and Russia, and in the campaigns which led to the liberation of Europe! Our own happy country has likewise expended much of her best blood in the long protracted struggle in which we have been engaged.

The fourth vial was poured out upon the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. The sun is usually the symbol of the imperial or

sovereign power; but in "an empire split into many "kingdoms, like the Roman empire, the sun is the "government of that state which, from its superi-"ority of power, resembles the bright orb of day "in the midst of the stars, or independent kings of "the imperial firmament."* France was certainly the state in the Roman empire, at the period of the seventh trumpet, which possessed that superiority of power. The symbolical sun therefore denotes the government of France. The limited monarchy of that country was overthrown in the year 1792, and was succeeded by the revolutionary government, which, in every stage of its existence, whether republican or imperial, has tormented the men of the Roman earth with a most grinding tyranny.

From the dreadful nature of the late contest, so long protracted by the ruthless ambition of the French rulers, have also proceeded those severe measures of military preparation and finance, to which all the governments of Europe have resorted since the commencement of the revolutionary war. Thus the symbolical sun of France has not only exercised a scorching tyranny over its subjects and vassals, but has indirectly become the source of oppression to the inhabitants of every corner of Europe. That sun has now however set in blood, and a pause is afforded to the afflicted nations. Happy would it be for them, if this interval were to

* Faber's Dissertation, vol. i. p. 90.—Mr. Granville Sharp, following Sir Isaac Newton, thinks the sun is put for the whole species and race of kings, shining with regal glory; and that this vial is fulfilled by the boundless increase, throughout all nations, of standing armies, martial law, unlimited regal will, and the ruinous expense of supporting their armies.

be employed in averting the wrath of God by timely repentance. Of this however there are no appearances. The sure word of prophecy is evidently receiving its accomplishment, that the men who under this vial "were scorched with great heat, "blasphemed the name of God and repented not "to give him glory." Every account we receive of the state of the continental nations, especially of Catholic Europe, agrees in representing them to have given themselves up to commit iniquity with greediness. In this country true religion has, as already observed, made very great progress within the last twenty years; but still there are no indications of general repentance and reformation; indeed there is growing and melancholy evidence, that the reverse is the case, and that the body of the nation is becoming more depraved.* With respect to us also

* It may to some appear a paradox to assert, that true religion is growing in a nation, and at the same time general depravity is increasing. But let it be considered, that this was actually the case with the Jewish nation, before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; for we read on the one hand, in Acts vi. 7, that "the word "of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in "Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests was obedient "to the faith;" and in chap. xxi. 20, "Thou seest, brother, how "many thousands of Jews there are which believe:" but on the other hand we know, both from the New Testament and Josephus, that the body of the Jewish nation became more and more corrupted, until they at length reached a pitch of wickedness which can scarcely be exceeded by human nature, and they thereby drew down upon themselves utter destruction.

Now there are many circumstances in this nation, which seem to assimilate our case to that of the Jews. Like them we have, in an unexampled degree, enjoyed the light of divine truth. Many thousands have in consequence become truly religious, and there is a manifest increase of real scriptural piety, evincing itself by its most genuine fruits, love to God and man. While however these things

as a nation, it is but too true, that we have not repented to give glory to God. How common is it to

afford ground of consolation, it is necessary to view also the other side of the picture. The general increase of crimes among the lower orders of the community, and the deterioration of their morals, are unfortunately matters of notoriety, and have lately been stated in evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons. One magistrate (P. Colquhoun, Esq.) says, in his examination before the Police Committee on the morals of the metropolis, "With regard to the lower "orders of society, I think there has been a progressive retrograde from "the commencement of the revolutionary French war, particularly "in all large towns." J. Gifford, Esq. says, in answer to a question whether the morals of the lower orders are stationary or are on the decline, "Woefully on the decline."—"Has the number of juvenile "depredators increased of late years? Certainly; I am speaking as "far as my own experience and observation go.—Can you state to "the Committee any cause for that circumstance? The increased "profligacy of the lower classes of the people."

W. Fielding, Esq.—"I really think that, from the increasing wick-"edness of the times, from the increasing gin-drinking, from the dirt "and overpowering multitude of children that are in every part of "the town, without our being able to clear the streets of a thousandth "part of them, that there must be a vast increase of immorality "most assuredly.—Do you then consider, that the increase of crime, "which according to the different returns that have been laid before "Parliament seems at present to be an established fact, proceeds from "a positive diminution of public morals, or from an increase of "population? Most assuredly from the profaneness of the times, "and from the increase of a very profligate population, which has "met with no impediment, nothing to correct it. It is now going "on as it was before, notwithstanding all our vigilance and particular "care."

"This alarming increase of immorality is indeed marked with "something of a peculiar character. It partakes of a certain portion "of what may be termed the tinge of civilization: it is less atrocious "than formerly; the crimes are not generally of so brutal a descrip-"tion. But the extent of irreligion is much greater, and is now "combined with an increased organized hostility to subordination "and good order.

The preceding extracts are taken from a volume, entitled, "The "Basis of National Welfare, in a Letter to the Earl of Liverpool, by "the Rev. R. Yates." Surely the melancholy facts which they

hear all our sufferings imputed to the corruptions of our Government, and how rarely do we witness the language of Christian humiliation and sorrow, for the sins, national and individual, which have been the real sources of those calamities, with which we have been visited. But to refuse to see the hand of God in the inflictions of his wrath, and to impute them to man, is in effect blaspheming him.

The fifth vial was poured out upon the seat or throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain. A throne is the symbol denoting the power,

disclose afford room for the most serious apprehensions. It is with nations as with individuals, there is a state in which they become ripe for divine judgment, and when they arrive at it nothing can avert the blow. As it has been energetically said by a writer of the present day, "*When the hour comes, it must strike.*"—The reader will find a very able view of the present moral state of the lower classes in this country, in the Quarterly Review for December, 1812, p. 319—356. If similar evidence could be procured of the state of the higher classes as to morals and religion, it would probably not in any degree remove the mournful impressions, produced by the contemplation of the condition of the lower orders. There is in the highest circles of society less of the grossness and deformity of vice; but their moral and religious state may probably be justly summed up in a few words, "*They live without God in the world.*" It must also be considered, that the knowledge and light of the higher classes are greater, and therefore they are more criminal. Indeed they are responsible for much of the depravity of those below them, especially of their domestics and immediate dependents, who are corrupted by their evil example, and manifest disregard of the ordinances of religion and the Day of the Lord, which they habitually profane by making it a day of pleasure or recreation, or selecting it for the performance of journeys; so that in the lives of those who conform to the fashions of high life, all distinction between the Sunday and other days is obliterated, with the exception perhaps of a formal attendance on the morning service of the Church.

the authority, and the councils of an empire; * and in the divided Roman empire, it must mean the power and councils of its head (the head of the beast). Now, in the year 1792, when the seven vials began to be poured out, the Austrian sovereign, in his capacity of Emperor of Germany and of the Romans, was the head of the beast. The influence of this vial upon the Austrian throne is sufficiently apparent. Austria was at the head of all the coalitions against France. Her total failure and discomfiture in them, the infatuate blindness which so often marked her councils, the defeat of army after army, and the loss of one province after another, till at length she fell prostrate at the feet of her conqueror, and her sovereign renounced the title of Emperor of the Romans—are events well known to those who have paid any attention to the wonderful history of the present period. In these events we may trace the first accomplishment of this vial.

The throne of the beast was next transferred to France, and the plague of this vial followed its devoted object, by affecting first the councils of Bonaparte and lastly his power. It merits our most attentive consideration, that until the period when the renunciation of the imperial titles of Rome by Austria, rendered Napoleon the virtual representative of the Cæsars, his enterprises on the continent of Europe, were crowned with complete success. But now he occupied the throne of the beast, and

* Rev. xiii. 2. The dragon gave the beast his power, and his throne, and great authority. The word "throne" is here evidently used as synonymous with the other two.

the influence of the fifth vial began forthwith to be felt by him. Its effects appeared first in the infatuate blindness of his conduct towards Spain. That country was one of the most devoted of his allies. But not satisfied with the substantial control of its resources for the purposes of his ambition, he aimed at its annexation to the French empire, and having procured an instrument whereby the reigning king resigned to himself the throne, he transferred it to his brother Joseph. The Spanish nation however refused to acquiesce in this transaction, and rose in arms against their oppressor, and from this time may be dated the decline of his power and resources.

The next glaring instance of infatuation in the conduct of Bonaparte was his invasion of Russia in the year 1812. From that enterprise he returned a fugitive to his capital, after the complete destruction, by the hand of Heaven itself, of the best appointed and most formidable army of disciplined troops which till then the world had ever seen. But the heart of this modern Pharaoh still continued hardened, and he once more advanced into Germany in the following year. Here again the influence of this vial on his councils is discernible. Nothing but infatuation seems to have induced him, after the declaration of Austria in favour of the allies, to remain at Dresden till his retreat was nearly cut off, and he was hemmed in on every side by an overwhelming force, and was in consequence obliged to hazard the general action at Leipsick, in which his power was finally broken. He still however refused the terms of peace which were offered by the allies;

and in the year 1814, the confederated sovereigns dictated at Paris his deposition and exile to Elba. From thence he again emerged, and suddenly appeared in France in the following spring, only to sustain a last and irreparable defeat, and to complete the series of wonderful vicissitudes which had marked his life, by delivering himself up to that power whose destruction he had most incessantly pursued. This man, at whose name the nations so lately trembled, is now confined as a state prisoner: and by a coincidence too strange not to bear upon it the marks of divine ordination, the place of his captivity is a barren rock in the midst of the Atlantic, which is itself a fit emblem of his past history, St. Helena being manifestly the summit of an extinguished volcano.*

In reviewing the character of the Apocalyptic beast, we however saw, that under his last political form, the imperial power is participated between the seventh head healed of its deadly wound and ten regal horns. I am therefore of opinion, that the effects of this vial are not limited to that power representing the head of the beast, but are at this moment in a measure felt by all the governments of the bestial empire and their subjects. The dreadful struggle in which they have been engaged has left them all in a condition of lassitude and debility, disordering their finances and surrounding them

* Having myself resided a week in the island of St. Helena, fourteen years ago, I was at the time forcibly struck with the appearances of its volcanic origin. They are also mentioned in the accounts of it which have lately appeared. I at that time little suspected that it was destined to receive so celebrated an inhabitant.

with difficulty and embarrassment. In consequence of this vial we are informed that the kingdom of the beast "was full of darkness, and they gnawed their "tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of "heaven because of their pains and their sores, and "repented not of their deeds." Darkness is an emblem signifying perplexity and misery, and it aptly describes the present state of Europe, filled as it is with various and complicated distress. The decay and embarrassments of commerce, and the stagnation of manufactures, have every where reduced the labouring classes of the community to a state of the most abject wretchedness. Our own country has also suffered, not only from these causes, but perhaps even to a greater degree from the ruin which has nearly overwhelmed its agricultural population. But still our distresses have been light in comparison with those of the continental nations.*

* It is my wish to support all my inferences from facts, by testimony of an authentic nature. Now with respect to the general distress which at the present moment overwhelms Europe, those statesmen who are at the helm of government must possess the most enlarged information. On this subject I therefore insert the following extract from Lord Castlereagh's Speech in the House of Commons, on the 7th of February, 1817, as reported in the Times Newspaper of the following day:—"He was as little disposed to deny as he was "ready to lament, that the country was suffering under the severest "pressure in every branch of its industry and resources; that this "distress was as universal as it was severe; and that from the highest "to the lowest rank, through all classes of society, the hand of Pro-"vidence was severely felt. It was rather an aggravation than an "alleviation of the sufferings of a generous people, to know that they "did not suffer alone; but if our calamities could be soothed by "a fellowship in distress, we need only look into Europe to find "causes of consolation. No state on the Continent, however small "or great, no class of society, were exempt from that pressure and "exhaustion, which were consequent upon a war of such extent. If

In an especial manner the effects of the fifth vial, have fallen upon the devoted kingdom of France, with a heavy and overwhelming weight of calamity, the extent of which it is difficult for those to estimate who have no local information. I have shown, in a former part of this volume,* that the number of the allied troops which actually entered France after the last renewal of hostilities, was one million one hundred and forty thousand. And when we take a view of the necessary consumption of such a body of men, with its attendant cavalry, artillery, and baggage horses, we shall be able to form some vague estimate of the dreadful sufferings of the French nation. But in the preceding year 1814, also, the whole line of French territory from the Netherlands to Switzerland, as well as on the side of the Spanish frontier, was the seat of war. The various and complicated misery, which followed in the train of these visitations, added to the previous drain of the population, to supply the waste in the armies of Bonaparte, has filled France with darkness, and thus has the fifth vial received its awful accomplishment. But no salutary moral effect has been produced upon the nations of papal Europe. On the contrary, the most authentic accounts represent them to be more and more hardened in depravity. They gnaw their tongues for pain and blaspheme God because of their

" he compared Great Britain with any of these states, he should be " led to describe her as comparatively happy. Comparisons of this " kind, however, could not lighten our distress. Whatever was the " lot of other nations, our sufferings were severe; our calamity was " great."

* Page 35, Note.

pains and their sores, but repent not of their deeds.

The sixth vial was poured out on the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. A great river, in the language of symbols, denotes a great and populous nation. It is allowed by the ablest writers on the Apocalypse, and indeed by almost all who have written upon it, that the river Euphrates, in the sixth trumpet, signifies the nation of the Turks or Ottomans. Consistency therefore requires that it should be so understood here, and accordingly it is so explained by the most eminent expositors. The drying-up or evaporation of the waters of the Euphrates, points out to us the gradual decay of the Ottoman empire, by a species of internal consumption, and not its overthrow by an hostile invasion: for the figure in the last case would be the turning of the waters of the Euphrates into blood. It is sufficiently apparent, that for many years past the Turkish power has been hastening to its dissolution by an internal decay of its resources, and of all the principles of political health. It would also appear that its destruction is hastening on with more rapid progress by the immediate hand of God, which is visible for some years past in the dreadful ravages of the plague.* We have evidence before

* With respect to the desolation of Turkey by the plague, I have selected the following information from the public papers.

Times. London, October 29, 1814.—"The ravages of the plague "this year at Smyrna have been unusually dreadful. It is stated, "that in June frequently upwards of a thousand have been buried in "a day. One third of the inhabitants had left their dwellings and the "town. Some compute the deaths this year at 30,000; the least

our eyes, therefore, that this vial has long since begun to be poured out on the mystic Euphrates. Who the kings of the east, or the kings from the rising of the sun, are, for whom a way is to be prepared by the exhaustion of the waters of the Euphrates, is not yet certain. As the event is yet future the accomplishment only can throw light upon

" computation is 30,000. Smyrna is said to contain from 150,000 " to 180,000 inhabitants. All Asia Minor, Syria, the Islands, &c. " experienced this year a similar loss of about one-quarter, or one- " fifth of the whole population.—The crops of corn, &c. remain " ungathered in the fields, in many places in the interior, for want of " hands; and several towns and villages have been entirely abandoned. " In Smyrna, the keys of 800 houses have been delivered to the " governor, as many families have been altogether extirpated, and " the government is heir where there is no very near relation."

Morning Post. February 6, 1816.—" Agram, in Croatia, Jan. 22, " 1816. We received on the 10th the news, that the plague had " extended from Turkey into our environs, as far as Dubitza, and " other places. In the Turkish part of Dubitza most of the inha- " bitants have perished, but in the Austrian part but few persons have " been attacked."

The same Newspaper, Feb. 27, 1816.—" A Dutch mail has arrived. " It communicates the most melancholy details of the ravages of the " plague in the province of Bosnia, which it has nearly depopulated. " This Turkish province, which had hardly a million of inhabitants, " has lately lost 500,000 persons by the plague. Three years ago, " upon an exact enumeration of the Catholics, they were found to " amount to 112,000 souls, of whom scarcely a half are now re- " maining. The disease has not yet ceased to rage."

From various accounts which have appeared in the public papers, it would appear, that since the above period the plague has never entirely disappeared in the provinces of Turkey.

I copy the following paragraph from a Provincial Paper, of November 14, 1816, under the head of London, Nov. 8.

" The accounts from Turkey describe the vast mass of that empire " as resembling the Roman power in the latest stage of its decline. " The authority of the government is every where despised through- " out the provinces of the empire, and of course the very resources " for enforcing submission must every day become less productive."

it. The general opinion is, that by the kings of the east, the Jews are intended; but the late venerable Mr. Granville Sharp was of opinion, that the risen martyrs of the first resurrection are designated by this appellation. I feel myself inclined to adopt the former opinion, but I do not wish to speak, with any degree of confidence, of the manner of the accomplishment of what is yet future. I shall consider the other events of this vial when I treat of the seventh.

The seventh vial was poured out into the air. This vial is the most important of the whole. It has justly been styled the vial of consummation. It comprises within itself more particulars than all the other vials: its contents occupy the last verses of the sixteenth and the whole of the three following chapters of the Apocalypse. In order to interpret this vial aright, it is necessary to inquire, in the first place, what is intended by the *symbolical air* into which it is poured. It is through the medium of the natural air, or atmosphere, that the natural sun, moon, and stars, communicate to us their light, their heat, and influences; it is the same air which is in us the principle of vitality. Now, through what air, or atmosphere, do the symbolical sun, moon, and stars communicate to us their influences, their light, and heat? I answer, that it is through the medium of the political and ecclesiastical constitutions of the states. These constitutions are also the principle of vitality to the body politic. The political and ecclesiastical constitutions of the states of the world, are therefore the symbolical air or atmosphere. Hence it is, perhaps, that Satan (in

Ephes. ii.) was called the prince of the power of the air; because he ruled, and was seated, and enthroned in the political constitutions of the world, which were all framed on principles friendly to the interests of his kingdom.

I presume, therefore, that the seventh vial is poured out upon the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the Roman empire, as it was fixed at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, in the year 1792. The immediate effects of this vial are *voices, thunders, and lightnings, in the symbolical atmosphere;* a tremendous agitation throughout the government, and politico-ecclesiastical system of the bestial empire, destructive of the general equilibrium or balance of power, and superinducing all the horrors of a political storm. I need scarcely add, that this is an exact description of the state of the Babylonian empire, from the year 1792, till the late pacification of Europe; and if the violence of the tempest has seemed at times to abate, it has in the succeeding moment raged even with more awful fury.

"And there was a great earthquake, such as "was not since men were upon the earth, so "mighty an earthquake, and so great."—This mighty earthquake is the effect of the political storm previously mentioned; and it most exactly describes that stupendous and terrific revolution in the Roman empire, which commenced in the overthrow of the French monarchy in 1792, and has since extended to every corner of continental Europe.

The above interpretation of the seventh vial, was the result of a close attention to the analogies of the

symbolical language, and was first inserted in a paper I sent to the Christian Observer more than eight years ago. Until after the publication of the first edition of this work, I had no suspicion that the very same explanation of the hieroglyphics of this vial, had been given by another writer. But having then met with the commentary of the learned Vitringa, I was both surprised and gratified to find so very near a resemblance between his exposition and my own, as might very naturally have subjected me to the charge of plagiarism. I mention this circumstance, not only to vindicate myself from such an imputation, but also because it tends to show that the language of symbols is not (as many suppose, of arbitrary or uncertain signification, but is interpretable upon fixed principles, to ascertain and define which is the first duty of a commentator, as the judicious application of that language to the events of history is the second.

Vitringa maintains that the pouring this vial into the air signifies the dissolution of the political and ecclesiastical government of the bestial empire. "All "things (says he) shall be so agitated in the political "and ecclesiastical government of that great empire, "that the people shall be without air to breathe and "to refresh them: for the princes and governors of "the nations, inasmuch as they cherish their "subjects, and abound towards them in care and "good management, are as it were the breath of the "people, like the air which they imbibe and inhale, "as they are called in Jeremiah (Lament. v. 20). "That air being violently agitated shall be the "occasion of God's inflicting those heavy judgments

"which he has determined against the empire of "the beast for its utter subversion."*

Having ascertained the general nature of the events predicted in the seventh vial, I must now recall the attention of the reader to certain conclusions at which I arrived, in a former part of this work. In considering the sixth seal I endeavoured to prove, that the earthquake which is described in it, is the same as that of the seventh trumpet and seventh vial, and that all these passages afford different views of the last great revolution, which immediately precedes the second advent. I also showed, that the vision of four angels holding the four winds of the earth in the seventh chapter, relates to an interval of peace in the midst of the earthquake, which is granted for the purpose of the

* I shall here give a further quotation from Vitringa on the words of the 18th verse. "Sensus verborum planus est et facilis, effectum "sive consequens hujus Phialæ effusæ, fore maximam totius imperii "adversarii concussionem et commotionem, conjunctam cum demon-"stratione clarissima Divinæ Majestatis, et terribilibus speciminibus "Justitiæ judiciorumque ejus quæ magnum hostibus Ecclesiæ ejus "incuterent terrorem, graviora hoc tempore mala experturis, et gra-"viorum metu ad summas redigendis angustias. Totus antichristianæ "civitatis et ecclesiæ status jam ante concussus, hoc tempore subver-"teretur, qui terræ motus longe ad huc esset gravior et notabilior "quam extiterat in subversa Hebræorum Republica et œconomia "vetere per Romanos dequo Haggai vaticinatus erat; et cum quo "comparari potest. Quanto enim Imperium bestiæ cujus Roma caput "est, se extendit latius quippe in plura divisum ampla potentium po-"pulorum regna; tanto etiam hujus civitatis politicæ et ecclesiasticæ "destructio et abolitio res esset majoris moliminis et difficilioris "operæ; et tanto etiam illustriora et sonantiora indicia Divinæ Ma-"jestatis sanctitatisque (quæ alibi jam monuimus per voces, Fulgura "et Tonitrua designari,) quæ cum hoc terræ motu hoc est subver-"sione status imperii pseudochristiani toti patefierent orbi, omnium "percuterent oculos et aures, mortaliumque omnium excuterent stu-"porem."

sealing of the elect. And from the correspondence of the late wonderful events on the continent of Europe, with the description given of the holding of the four winds, I concluded that we have actually arrived at the pause shadowed forth in that vision, and that the four angels holding the winds, are a typical representation of the mighty confederacy led on by four great powers which lately gave peace to Europe, and continue to occupy France for the preservation of tranquillity.

Now if these conclusions be just, it follows as a necessary consequence from them, that a corresponding pause must take place in the effects of some at least of the vials. The elements of discord and disorder which have hitherto produced such fearful consequences must for a time suffer unwilling coercion. A period of tranquillity must ensue, in which however shall be discernible on the one hand the mingled effects of lassitude and extreme exhaustion; and on the other the feverish agitation of revolutionary principles still working, but prevented from breaking out into action.

I leave it to those who are carefully studying the moral and political history of our own times, to judge how far the above description, answers to the actual state of affairs. I myself believe, for the reasons already given, that the operation of the seventh vial is for the present suspended, and that as it is yet only in part poured out, some passages of the narrative of that vial, cannot in consequence apply to any past, or present events, but wait their accomplishment at a future period, when the calamities of the earthquake shall be renewed with more

awful fury. The use to be derived from these remarks will appear in considering the next clause of the prophecy. I have therefore thought it proper to introduce them here, rather than in another place.

"And the great city was divided into three parts." —Some commentators have supposed, that these words are to be understood as analogous to the declaration of God concerning Jerusalem, in Ezek. v. 12. "A third part of thee shall die with the "pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed "in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by "the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a "third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a "sword after them." If interpreted in this way, the tripartite division of the great city must mean its destruction by three different kinds of plagues. It seems however more probable, that a division either territorial, political, or religious, is designed. The great city signifies the Roman empire as constituting a great federal state. If by its being formed into three parts, a religious division be intended, it may be something similar to what has lately taken place in the Germanic confederacy, where, as already observed, one of the first principles settled at the Congress of Vienna was, that henceforth perfect equality shall subsist between the three religious persuasions, Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic. This principle was never before recognised in its full extent. But should the tripartite division be one of a political nature, then it may be analogous to what has already in some degree been effected. The European republic is at the present moment distinguishable into three political parts: 1st. the great

confederacy which occupies France with its armies: 2d. France: 3d. the other parts of Europe, including Spain, Portugal, Italy, &c. There is one other mode in which this division may be formed, viz. a partition of the whole territories of the Western empire between three great powers. It is not however easy to reconcile the idea of such a division as this, with those passages of prophecy which seem to announce, that the ten kingdoms which arose in the Western empire, in consequence of the Gothic irruptions and conquests, are in one shape or another to continue until the last great battle. Upon the whole then it appears to me probable, that the division into three parts will be either religious, or political, and not territorial. But I cannot with confidence apply the prophecy to any thing that has yet taken place. The division is probably future, and will receive its accomplishment in events, which are either not begun or are only in part developed.

"And the cities of the nations fell."—As the *great city* signifies the Roman empire considered as one great federal republic, so by analogy the *cities of the nations* must denote the individual political and ecclesiastical communities and governments, which form the component parts of that republic. The late venerable Granville Sharp supposed *the cities of the nations* to signify all governments within the Roman empire which could not be deemed regal; as those of Venice, Genoa, the German electorates, the Italian states of Florence and Parma, the states of Holland and Switzerland. In either sense of the symbol, we have seen at least the inchoate accomplishment of this prophecy, by the fall of nearly all the govern-

ments of Continental Europe since the French Revolution, or by their being shaken to the foundation. And though in consequence of the late settlement of Europe they have been again erected; yet the forms of the greater part of them are no longer the same, or the basis on which they rest, as well as their civil and religious institutions, are changed: so that the whole of this new political fabric may be compared to a fallen building rebuilt with its old materials, and somewhat of its ancient shape, but still so altered as to be substantially different from what it was before. Above all, the principles which formerly cemented it, seem to be for ever departed.

And great Babylon came up in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. The great city is Rome secular, considered as one great federal republic; and great Babylon is Rome ecclesiastical, or the Roman church, viewed as a great spiritual community.

The awful judgments which have fallen upon the catholic clergy, the spoliation of the Romish church in the greater part of Europe, and the seizure of the ecclesiastical state, seem to be the incipient fulfilment of this passage. The pope has indeed lately recovered his temporal principality: but I have been assured, that the territory of the church is beyond every other part of Italy and Europe, the scene of the most abject misery. The mere re-establishment of the papal government under such circumstances of wretchedness, does not therefore take away from the evidence, that this part of the vial is receiving its accomplishment.

"And every island fled away, and the mountains "were not found."—As the cities of the nations signify their political and ecclesiastical communities and governments; I conceive that islands and mountains mean states and kingdoms, considered in reference to their individuality of existence, as separate and independent principalities. If the government of a nation is overthrown, as that of France at the Revolution, the city which symbolizes it is said to fall. But if a kingdom by conquest loses its independence, and is occupied by foreign troops, then the island or mountain which represents it is said to flee away, or be removed out of its place. In this sense perhaps the mountain representing France fled away when the allied armies took possession of Paris. And in a similar manner the islands and mountains representing the greater part of the states and kingdoms of the Roman empire have fled away since the year 1792.*

* "Sensus est communem hoc tempore et generalem fere rerum in "orbe Europæo et maxime in imperio Romanensi mystico eique "subjectis regnis et rebus publicis catastrophen."—"Est interim "quod hic diligenter observemus, eadem hæc verba nos jam habuisse "in prophetia sigilli sexti, quæ declarat res in fine sextæ vel in initio "septimæ periodi temporis, libro sigillorum circumscripti eventuras; "quæque huic nostræ per omnia parallela est, et ipsum quoque "emblema hujus phialæ declarat ut modo monebam. Ibi nempe "postquam mentio fuisset facta cœli abolendi, et solis, lunæ, ac "siderum, loco suo aut statu movendorum, exerte additur, cap. vi. 14. "*Et omnes montes et insulæ è locis suis motæ sunt.*" Quo argumento "plane persuademur prophetiam sigillorum æque ac tubiciniorum "illam decurrere ad ultima ecclesiæ tempora; quia dubitari non "potest, phialam hanc septimam illud nobis ecclesiæ tempus demon-"strare, quod gloriosum illius statum proxime præcedet. Esse autem "eandem prophetiam hanc parallelam prophetiæ tubicinii septimi, "jam observavimus ad præcedentes hujus prophetiæ pericopas et "novo argumento adstruitur ex iis verbis, quæ nunc sequuntur.—

Where are now the celebrated republics of Venice, of Genoa, and Holland? They have disappeared by being merged into other kingdoms. Where is the Germanic or holy Roman empire?—Where the ancient absolute monarchy of France? Their political forms have undergone such mutations as to render them no longer the same. Where again is the mighty empire erected by Bonaparte? It has crumbled into dust. Thus have the islands and mountains begun to flee away. But we are yet only in the midst of the earthquake, and God has in mercy granted to us a pause, before the last and most awful part of the catastrophe. This part of the prophecy will then be more completely fulfilled.

Sometimes islands and mountains, in the symbolical style, denote kings and princes. If the symbol be understood in this sense in the passage before us, then it has received its fulfilment by the overthrow of many of the ancient dynasties of Europe in the first place, and secondly by that of the princes who reigned as the vassals of Napoleon.

"And there fell upon men a great hail out of "heaven."—Hail in the language of symbols seems to denote the plague of war; and this hail out of heaven shows by what means the dreadful effusion of blood is to be effected, which forms the subject of the second and third vials; and that this is by an awful tempest of fierce and relentless wars, waged by the governments, or ruling powers of the Roman world. I need not say in what a fearful manner this has been fulfilled, in the wars which have desolated

"Estque hæc vera et certa clavis hujus libri recte interpretandi, quæ "merito magni facienda est." Vitringa, *in loco*.

every part of Europe since the year 1792, by the agency of revolutionary France.

The effects of the seventh vial are detailed more fully in the 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters of the Apocalypse; but as the greater part of the contents of these chapters is still future, we must patiently wait until events throw light upon them. It would seem however that under the seventh vial, the bestial empire will be moulded into that shape, which it is destined to assume before the beast and his ten kings are gathered together by diabolical agency, to the battle of the great day of the Lord. All the revolutionary changes which take place in consequence of the effusion of this vial into the symbolical air, will have a tendency to prepare the Roman empire for that last blasphemous opposition to the Lamb, in which it shall perish.* I apprehend therefore that we are not to look for any reformation in the body of the nations composing the western empire. Many individuals will probably be awakened to true repentance, by the awful signs of the times, and the preaching of the Gospel, but the great majority of the inhabitants of the empire shall wax worse and worse, and at length reach a daring pitch of wickedness, which shall draw down upon them the signal vengeance of the Almighty Word of Jehovah in the day of Armageddon. It would, I conceive, be very rash to form conjectures, with regard to the shape which the empire will assume preparatory to that event. I think however it may be gathered from prophecy, that its division into ten kingdoms will continue substantially until that time; but what

* Rev. xvii. 13, 14. xix. 15—20.

power is then to be the representative of the Cæsars, and to head the last great confederacy, seems to me to be no where declared. At the publication of the first edition of this work I indeed thought otherwise, conceiving that the power of France was to remain unbroken to the end. But events have shown that I was mistaken, and as I conceive the legitimate province of the interpreter of prophecy, is to explain prophecies already fulfilled, and not to hazard conjectures as to the manner of the accomplishment of what is future, I shall carefully abstain from all such conjectural expositions, observing only that when the beast shall be moulded into his last political shape, then I conceive the organization of that confederacy will be complete, which is to be gathered together by diabolical influence to the battle of Armageddon.

It may probably occur to the attentive reader, as an objection to the above scheme of interpretation, that the gathering together of the last confederacy to Armageddon, is to take place under the *sixth vial;* and that therefore it is contradictory to suppose that the confederacy is to be formed under the *seventh vial.* To this I answer, that there are probably two reasons why the gathering together of the confederacy to Armageddon is mentioned under the sixth vial. The first of these is, that the great battle, and treading of the winepress, are to take place in Judea; and consequently these events have a natural and close connection with the downfall of the Turkish empire, which is the subject of the sixth vial, and they come very naturally to be mentioned immediately after the fall of that power, of which

Judea is a province. The second reason is, that the waters of the mystic Euphrates are dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared, and these kings of the east are probably the converted Jews. Now there is a foundation for believing, that the object of the gathering together of the last confederacy to Armageddon, will be to oppose the purposes of God with respect to the Jews; and if so, there is the greatest beauty and propriety in that gathering together being introduced under the sixth vial, *i. e.* under the vial in which the way of the Jews is to be prepared. On the other hand, the organization of the confederacy is placed under the seventh vial; because it is composed of materials which could have no existence till a mighty revolution was effected in the politico-ecclesiastical constitution of the Roman empire, by the effusion of the seventh vial of wrath on that constitution, *i. e.* on the symbolical atmosphere.* The

* It may without difficulty be shown, that Mr. Faber's scheme of the vials, which supposes their effusion to be successive, is radically deficient. Mr. Faber, like myself, supposes that a great confederacy of the kings of the western empire is to be formed under the vials, and broken at Armageddon. But his scheme does not account for the formation of the confederacy, which is itself *an effect* of the wrath of God poured out on the bestial empire. Now under which of the vials does Mr. Faber place *this special effect of the divine wrath?* As far as I understand his scheme, there is no room in it for that change in the political form of the western empire, which is to issue in the last great combination of its sovereigns against the Lamb. Indeed from Mr. Faber's scheme, as modified in his fifth edition, the French revolution, *as a symbolical earthquake*, is altogether excluded, though he still holds that revolution to be the third woe, and though it exactly corresponds with his own definition of a symbolical earthquake.

The scheme of the vials contained in these pages has been charged with having a tendency to introduce confusion into the Apocalyptic

above arrangement is also entirely agreeable to the enigmatical form of the Apocalyptic prophecies, and yet introduces no confusion into them: and if the vials be synchronical, there is no solid argument against it.

I shall now offer one or two arguments to show that the vials certainly are synchronical.

The *seven vials* are the constituent parts of the third woe, or the *seventh trumpet,* and contain all the remarkable events of that woe. But these vials contain only one earthquake (or revolution), viz. that of the seventh vial; and likewise only one symbolical storm, with its concomitant effects, which is also mentioned in the seventh vial: therefore the seventh trumpet contains only one symbolical earthquake and storm; and it follows, that the lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail, seen by the apostle in Rev. xi. 19. are precisely the

arrangement. In order to show how little foundation there is for this charge, I shall here give a short analysis of my own theory. Instead of dividing the third woe into seven successive periods, I suppose all its seven vials to be cotemporaneously poured out, on the different component parts of the same symbolical world.

The *first vial* affects the political, religious, and moral principles of the inhabitants of the empire.

The *second and third vials*, represent the slaughter of its inhabitants.

The *fourth vial* affects the imperial power, in its influencial effects upon human happiness.

The *fifth*, affects the same power, in its intrinsic authority and stability.

The *sixth*, destroys the Ottoman power.

The *seventh*, dissolves the whole frame of the political and ecclesiastical government of the empire.

Now whether the above arrangement be true, or false, must be established by arguments, drawn from the prophecy itself compared with events. But even if it were proved to be false, I see not, how it can be justly said to be confused or indistinct.

same with those of the seventh vial.* But the symbolical tempest and earthquake of Rev. xi. 19. (which are the same with those of the seventh vial) immediately succeed the opening of the temple of God in heaven, which had previously been shut; and the effusion of the first vial also immediately

* In this inference, I have the support both of Mede and Vitringa, two of the greatest authorities on prophecy; and their agreement on this point, is the more remarkable, because in their general arrangement of the seals and trumpets they differ. The only objection to the foregoing conclusion, which I have met with deserving of notice, is to the following effect: It is alleged, that Rev. xi. 19, indicates the convulsions in France about 1792, not as *a part of* the vials, but *introductory to them*, and therefore, the earthquakes, in xi. 19. and xvi. 19, are totally different. Now in answer to this argument, I observe, 1st. That it seems evident, if the earthquake of chap. xi. 19. had been introductory to the vials, it would have been again mentioned in chap. xv. 5—7. before the vials were delivered to the angels, and thus the narrative in that place would have been connected with xi. 19, and the possibility of a mistake in confounding two different earthquakes prevented. 2nd. If the events in France in the year 1792, were an earthquake, it is unphilosophical to say, that the earthquake was limited to the first convulsions of the revolution. All that followed till the dethronement of Bonaparte, was evidently a continuation of the earthquake. Nay, if the revolution shall hereafter break out again, it will still be the same earthquake. In this conclusion, I shall at least, I presume, have the concurrence of Mr. Faber, who agrees with me in assigning to the earthquake in Rev. xi. 13, a duration of a century and a half. It is very remarkable, that an author of the present day, in a pamphlet which has no relation to the interpretation of prophecy, has termed the French revolution and its consequences to a late period, *a continued earthquake*. "To say that either the church or the state is free from "danger, would in times like the present, be an empty and presumptuous boast. *The earthquake, by which so many churches, and so many "states have been shattered into ruin, still continues to heave the "ground*, and it appears evident, that these dreadful convulsions of "the moral and political world, are by the unseen councils of providence, directed to bring about some great renovation in the "religious state of man." Three Letters on the British and Foreign Bible Society, by the Right Hon. N. Vansittart, 1812.

follows the opening of the temple in heaven: * therefore the earthquake of the seventh vial, which is the same with that of Rev. xi. 19. must be synchronical with the effusion of the first vial, since they both equally happen immediately after the opening of the temple. And the first and seventh vials being thus shown to be synchronical, all the rest must be so likewise.

I observe further, that according to the fifth general rule of interpretation laid down in the preface, we must conclude that Rev. xvi. 16. where the gathering together of the beast and the kings of the earth at Armageddon is first mentioned, corresponds in time with xix. 19, where John again sees them gathered together. But the first of these passages comes in at the end of the *sixth vial*, and the last at the close of the *seventh vial*; therefore the end of both these vials corresponds in point of time, and consequently their effusion must also be parallel. Now if these two vials are synchronical, no good reason can be offered against the whole being so.

Having thus endeavoured to show, from the internal marks contained in the Apocalypse itself, that the vials are synchronical, I now proceed to draw the same inference, from the application of the vials to the awful events of our own times. It is now generally admitted by interpreters, that the vials began to be poured out not later than the year 1792. But exactly at the same time a symbolical earthquake began to heave the ground, which for twenty-three years continued to convulse and agonize every part of Europe. In its awful progress it has been com-

* Rev. xv. 5; xvi. 1.

puted, that *ten millions of our species* have been destroyed by the sword or by violence. The expenditure of Europe in the contest has probably been at least *three thousand millions* sterling. When we add to these things the dreadful destruction of life by disease, the consequence of war; the dissolution of morals, introduced by excess of misery on the one hand, and on the other by an unlimited intercourse with the largest and most profligate armies ever known in history,* and also the terrible destruction of property, by plunder, confiscation, and fire, a mass of evil is presented to our imagination, of which the extent can only be known to that Omniscient Being, who sent this awful woe as a visitation for the sins of the world.

Now it seems utterly incredible, that the earthquake or political tempest, which was the moving cause, the volcanic crater of all this evil, should be no where mentioned in the vials of wrath, while its effects are so fully detailed. But it is not mentioned in them, unless it be the earthquake of the seventh vial: therefore the conclusion is, that it is *that very earthquake,* and that the seventh vial began to be poured out in 1792; and as the effusion of the first

* A very able and enlightened foreigner, with whom I had many conversations on the state of the continent before the overthrow of Bonaparte, observed to me, that "the corruption of manners, and "depravation of character, is still such on the continent, that "however melancholy is the conclusion, we cannot avoid forming it, "that mankind have not yet suffered enough." Speaking of the slaughter of men in the late wars, he said, "The lives of men are now "thought nothing of. 50,000 men are sacrificed in a day, 10,000 in "an affair of advanced posts. One of the dreadful consequences of "the present system of war is, that nearly all the wounded die. It is "impossible to provide hospitals for such prodigious multitudes."

vial took place in the same year, these two and all the other vials must be synchronical.

I have said above, that the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the Apocalypse also belong to the seventh vial. The first of these chapters contains a sublime description of the overthrow of Babylon. The nineteenth chapter begins with a song of praise for her destruction. It next proclaims the approach of the marriage of the Lamb, and announces that his wife, the church, hath made herself ready; and declares the blessedness of those who are called to the marriage-supper. The marriage of the Lamb is the commencement of that glorious state of rest of the church, which is the subject of so great a portion of the writings of the prophets. It is then that they who are the elect of Christ, at his second advent, shall enter into the temple, or holy of holies, into which it is before said that no man could enter, until the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.* This event seems precisely to synchronize with the destruction of the beast and false prophet, and their armies, at Armageddon, which is the last great event mentioned in the nineteenth chapter.

Having now endeavoured to explain the Apocalyptic vials, so far as events seem already to have reflected light upon them, it may be proper, before I close the subject, to take a short view of those great events, which the prophecies both of the Old and New Testament lead us to expect, previous to the consummation of the vials, at the great day of the Lord. The first of these events is the conversion

* Rev. xv. 8.

and restoration of the Jews. That the ancient people of God are to be converted to the faith of Christ, is a truth universally acknowledged by those, who have paid any attention to the prophetical Scriptures; and though the promises of their restoration to the land of their fathers, have by some interpreters been explained in a spiritual or symbolical sense, yet as I know not any late commentator of note who has adopted this opinion, I shall not enter upon the refutation of it, but content myself with quoting one or two passages of Scripture, which seem to me sufficient to establish the certainty of that great event.

"And it shall come to pass when all these things "are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, "which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call "them to mind among all the nations, whither the "Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return "unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, "according to all that I command thee this day, "thou and thy children, with all thine heart and "with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will "turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, "and will return and gather thee, from all the "nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered "thee. If any of thine be driven out into the "utmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord "thy God gather thee, and from thence will he "fetch thee. And the Lord thy God will bring "thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, "and thou shalt possess it: and he will do thee good "and multiply thee above thy fathers." * "Behold

* Deuter. xxx. 1—7.

"I will gather them out of all the nations, whither "I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, "and in my great wrath; and I will bring them "again into this place, and I will cause them to "dwell safely. And they shall be my people, and "I will be their God. And I will give them one "heart and one way, that they may fear me for "ever, for the good of them and of their children "after them."—"Yea, I will rejoice over them to "do them good, and will plant them in this land "assuredly with my whole heart and my whole "soul." *

Now to affirm, as some have done, that the foregoing promises were fulfilled, in the very partial restoration which took place after the captivity of Babylon, seems to me to be a mockery of the Scriptures of truth. The events predicted in these passages are evidently future, and will only receive their accomplishment, when God shall set his hand *the second time* † to gather the remnant of his people from the lands of their captivity.

Further, that the restoration of the Jews is to take place during the period of the vials, will appear for the following reasons; 1st. In Dan. xii. 7. it is announced, that at the accomplishing to scatter the power of the holy people, or in other words the restoration of Israel, all the things contained in that vision shall be finished. But the last of these things is the fall of a certain king "between the seas in the "glorious holy mountain." ‡ And whether we follow the interpretation of Mede and Bishop Newton, or of Mr. Faber, with respect to the power

* Jerem. xxxii. 37—42. † Isaiah xi. 11. ‡ Dan. xi. 45.

which is there intended, his fall will in either case happen at the period of the vials, and consequently the restoration of Israel, which synchronizes with his fall, must also take place at the time of the vials. 2dly. In Dan. xii. 1. it is said, that their restoration is to happen during a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation. But this from the chronology of Daniel's vision, can be no other, than the closing period of the vials. 3d. The prophecy contained in the beginning of the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, which manifestly relates to the national redemption of Israel, describes the treading of the winepress of the wrath of God in terms so similar to Rev. xiv. 19, 20. and xix. 15. that we cannot be mistaken in identifying the three passages. But the two last texts belong to the seventh vial, and describe the awful carnage at Armageddon: therefore the redemption of Israel takes place at the same period.

From the passage in Deuteronomy quoted above, I think it is certainly to be inferred, that the conversion of the Jews is to begin before their restoration. But on the other hand, there is a passage in Ezekiel,* from which it would appear, that they are not to be completely sanctified or washed with clean water, until after their return to their own land. By comparing both these prophecies, we therefore discover, that though their conversion will have commenced before they are restored; it will not be completed till after that event. In confirmation of this conclusion, there is a very remarkable description, in the prophecy of Zechariah,† of a great national

* Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25. † Zechar. xii. 9—14.

mourning, which is to take place among the returned Jews in their own land, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced; and as that text is evidently parallel with Rev. i. 7,* it follows that they both relate to the same appearance of our Saviour, which is clearly that of the second advent. Upon this passage in Zechariah many interpreters have accordingly founded an opinion, which I think quite correct, that the complete conversion of the Jewish nation will not take place till our Lord comes again with the clouds of heaven, at the destruction of Daniel's fourth beast, or the Roman empire,† which happens at the close of the Apocalyptic vials.

In exact conformity to these conclusions, we are taught in the prophecies of Joel, that at the very time when the Lord shall turn the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, he will also gather all nations, and will bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there, for his people Israel.‡ "Assemble yourselves and come, all ye heathen, and "gather yourselves together round about: thither "cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the "valley of Jehoshaphat, for there will I sit to judge "all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, "for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down, for the "press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness "is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of "decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the

* Compare with this view the Greek text of Rev. i. 7, and that of the Seventy on Zech. xii. 9—14, and it will be seen that the two texts manifestly describe the same scene.

† Dan. vii. 12, 13. ‡ Joel iii. 1, 2.

"valley of decision. The sun and moon shall be "darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their "shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, "and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the "heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord "will be the hope of his people, and the strength of "the children of Israel."*

The scene here disclosed to our view, is evidently the same as that described in Rev. xix. 11—19. and all the other parallel passages which have been quoted: and the great confederacy of the nations which is overwhelmed at the valley of Jehoshaphat, is manifestly that consisting of the beast and the kings of the earth, which St. John saw gathered together to the battle of Armageddon.

From all that has been said, we have reason to believe therefore, that during the remainder of the period assigned for the effusion of the vials, the conversion of the Jews, which seems already beginning, will proceed with accelerated velocity. When a considerable body of them are converted, it is natural to suppose, that they will pour out the most ardent and affectionate prayers for their unbelieving brethren, and for the redemption of the nation. Their supplications shall be answered. God will, in a manner hidden from us at present, gather together the whole nation from the countries where they now sojourn, and bring them into the land of their fathers, some of them in a converted state, but perhaps the greater part still being unconverted, at least in the spiritual sense of that word. During these events, it is probable that the western Roman

* Joel iii. 11—16.

empire will have filled up the measure of its iniquities, and will finally have assumed that political organization, which is to prepare it for the last confederacy, to be gathered together, by the agency of three unclean spirits, to the battle of Armageddon. The number of the elect 144,000, who are sealed for preservation from the last awful calamities, will have been completed, by means of that final preaching of the Gospel, mentioned in Matt. xxiv. 14, and Rev. xiv. 6, which is evidently begun; the destruction of mystical Babylon will also have taken place; and the Ottoman empire will probably have fallen. While the Jews are returning to their own land, or soon afterwards, the great confederacy of the nations will be assembled at Armageddon: and under this name I think, with many eminent interpreters, that some place in the Holy Land, and probably in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, is designated.

All things being now ready, I conceive that in this awful period, the Almighty Word of Jehovah will be revealed from heaven with ten thousands of his saints, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on a world assembled in arms against his people. At the same hour the elect of God shall be gathered from the four winds of heaven to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the final judgments shall be let loose against those nations which have named the name of Christ, but have not departed from iniquity.

Of the nature of these judgments it would be presumptuous to speak, excepting in the language of scripture. I shall therefore proceed to quote some passages, which seem to me descriptive of the closing period of the vials, making such short remarks, as

may occur to me in reference to the language in which they are expressed.

"And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, "and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into "the great winepress of the wrath of God. And "the winepress was trodden without the city, and "blood came out of the winepress even unto the "horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six "hundred furlongs." *

Dreadful as are the carnage and devastation which have already occurred since the commencement of the vials; what is here predicted far exceeds in horror, the most sanguinary scenes which the past history of the world records. A stream or lake of blood two hundred miles in extent, and up to the horses' bridles, is the figure used, and it denotes a destruction of men, of which we can scarcely form any clear conception.

"For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; "Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and "cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink "it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be "mad, because of the sword that I will send among "them."—"Therefore thou shalt say unto them, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Drink ye, be drunken, and spue, and fall, and "rise no more, because of the sword which I will "send among you. And it shall be, if they refuse "to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt "thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; "Ye shall certainly drink. For lo, I begin to bring

* Rev. xiv. 19, 20.

" evil on the city which is called by my name, and
" should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not
" be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon
" all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord
" of hosts. Therefore prophesy against them all
" these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall
" roar from on high, and utter his voice from his
" holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his
" habitation; he shall give a shout as they that tread
" the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.
" A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth:
" for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations,
" he will plead with all flesh; he will give them
" that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord.
" Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold evil shall
" go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirl-
" wind shall be raised up from the coasts of the
" earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at
" that day from one end of the earth even unto
" the other end of the earth; they shall not be
" lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they
" shall be dung upon the ground. Howl, ye shep-
" herds, and cry, and wallow yourselves in the ashes,
" ye principal of the flock; for the days of your
" slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished,
" and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. And the
" shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the prin-
" cipal of the flock to escape. A voice of the cry
" of the shepherds and an howling of the principal
" of the flock, for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture.
" And the peaceable habitations are cut down because
" of the fierce anger of the Lord. He hath for-

"saken his covert as the lion, for their land is de-
"solate because of the fierceness of the oppressor,
"and because of his fierce anger." *

Similar in its awful import to the above passage, is the following prophecy of Isaiah: "Come near, "ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people; let "the earth hear, and all that is therein, the world, "and all things that come forth of it. For the "indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and "his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly "destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the "slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and "their stink shall come up out of their carcases, "and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; "and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth "off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig "tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven, "behold it shall come down upon Idumea,† and "upon the people of my curse to judgment. The "sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made "fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and "goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for "the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great "slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns "shall come down with them, and the bullocks with

* Jer. xxv. 15, 16, and xxvii. 38.—I am willing to admit, that this awful prophecy had an inchoate accomplishment in the destruction of ancient idolatrous nations; but I think it quite manifest, that its main fulfilment is to be in the latter days.

† It is well known to the students of prophecy, that the Jews by Idumea understand Rome with its empire. I entirely concur in this interpretation of the word.

"the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, "and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the "day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of re-"compense for the controversy of Zion."*

The attentive reader, in perusing the above passage, will be naturally struck with the circumstance, that the sacred penman, or rather the Holy Spirit himself, who inspired the prophet, to declare this terrific message to the nations, seems to labour for expressions, and for imagery, with which to describe the dreadful carnage which is the subject of this vision. In one clause it is declared, that the mountains shall be melted with blood. This symbolical expression, signifies the melting down of kingdoms, by the blood or slaughter of their subjects. The entire dissolution of the host of the symbolical heavens, is next predicted. This is evidently the same overthrow of the existing political and ecclesiastical institutions, which is the subject of the sixth seal, and of which we have already seen, as it were, the first fruits. The sword of the Lord is said, in the clause which follows, to be bathed in heaven. This predicts a prodigious carnage of the princes, the governors, and nobles of the nations, who in the symbolical style are called "heaven," by a metonymy for the host of heaven. Ver. 6. "The sword of "the Lord is filled with the blood of lambs and "goats, &c." Lambs and goats in this verse, and unicorns, bullocks, and bulls, in the next, mean all ranks and sorts of people, the strong as well as the weakest, who shall all be brought down as beasts to the slaughter.†

* Isaiah xxxiv. 1—8. † Mr. Lowth, *in loco.*

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without "hands, which smote the image upon his feet that "were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces. "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, "and the gold broken to pieces together, and became "like the chaff of the summer thrashing floors, and "the wind carried them away, that no place was "found for them: and the stone that smote the "image, became a great mountain, and filled the "whole earth."*

The foregoing passage of Daniel, describes the same events as occur at the consummation of the vials, and its language implies nothing less than the utter dissolution of all the states occupying the territories of Daniel's four empires, so that not a remnant of them shall be left, and not a vestige of their political institutions and governments.

From the whole of the above passages of the prophetical scriptures, and others, which might be added did my limits permit their insertion, I think it may be inferred, that at the closing period of the vials, judgments more awful in their degree and extent, than any thing which has taken place since the deluge, will go forth against the guilty nations of the world, and especially those of the Roman empire. The peculiar scene of the treading of the winepress, will indeed be in the land of Judea, where the armies of the beast, and his confederate kings shall be gathered. Yet the visitation of wrath will not stop there, but according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, evil shall at the same time go forth from nation to nation, attended with the most tremendous

* Dan. ii. 34, 35.

slaughter, and awful manifestations of the divine anger, "for behold the Lord will come with fire, "and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render "his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of "fire. For by fire, and by his sword will the Lord "plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord "shall be many."* "And the beast was taken, "and the false prophet, these were both cast alive "into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."†

It is well known, that the ancient Jews believed, that Rome would be destroyed by material fire, like Sodom and Gomorrah, and in this opinion, they have been followed by very able protestant divines, among which number is Bishop Newton.‡ And it might not perhaps be difficult to prove, that some of our Lord's parables which speak of the destruction of the wicked by fire, and which are, by our popular divines referred to the general resurrection at the close of the millennium, shall receive their accomplishment at his advent before the millennium. But this would lead me into a discussion of too great length for the present work. I shall briefly observe, however, that by whatever means it is to be effected, I think it evident from the Scriptures, that the incorrigibly wicked shall be *exterminated from the*

* Isaiah lxvi. 15, 16. † Rev. xix. 20.

‡ The text of scripture on which the Jews founded this opinion, is Isaiah xxxiv. 9. It was the opinion also of Mede, that Christ's second advent, when the millennium is about to commence, shall be "in "flaming fire, by the divine and miraculous efficacy whereof the "world that now is shall be refined, and delivered from the bondage "of corruption which came upon it for the sin of man." See his Works, Book iii. p. 704. Nearly all the fathers held a similar doctrine, for the evidence of which I refer to Dr. Thomas Burnett, "De Statu Mortuorum et Resurgentium," cap. vii.

earth before the commencement of the millennium; and hence, all they are pronounced blessed, who come to the end of Daniel's prophetical period of one thousand three hundred and thirty five days.*

A question will here naturally suggest itself to the mind of the reader. What is to become of the righteous in the awful period described in the foregoing prophecies? Now, the answer to this inquiry has been given, in considering the seventh chapter of the Apocalypse. We there saw a suspension of the judgments of the last earthquake, for the express purpose of sealing the elect 144,000 for preservation, and in the following vision of the palm-bearing multitude, we beheld the whole assembly of the elect, standing before the throne, and described as having *come out of the great tribulation*. This tribulation is manifestly that of the closing period of the earthquake and vials; and we are thus assured, that the righteous are to be preserved during that final display of divine wrath. In confirmation of this interesting conclusion, it appears from Rev. xix. 9, that at the last scene of judgment, a call is given to the righteous to the marriage supper of the Lamb. In this blessed invitation, which is, I conceive, at the precise point of time when the palm-bearers come out of the great tribulation, shall be discerned, according to the prophecy of Malachi, the difference "between the "righteous and wicked, between him that serveth "God, and him that serveth him not."‡

But though the righteous are thus to be saved, I know not that we are warranted in expecting, that any of the nations, which have enjoyed and abused

* Dan. xii. 12. † Rev. vii. 1. 9. ‡ Mal. iii. 18.

the full light of the Gospel, will be spared from the destruction which is to overwhelm the papal Roman empire. The wicked in protestant countries, and particularly in our own highly favoured nation, are much more inexcusable than those who live amidst popish darkness and superstition; I can, therefore, see no scriptural ground for believing, that they will be more favourably treated. But as this country is now unquestionably the focus of evangelical light for the whole world, and as there is also reason to conjecture, that we are probably the people marked out by prophecy, for commencing the conversion and restoration of Judah, many persons may probably think, that for the sake of all this good we as a nation shall be spared. But it ought to be considered, that in like manner, the divine light of the Gospel first emanated from the Jewish nation, to the whole Gentile world, and yet the body of that people which believed not, were given up to destruction. The denunciations of those awful calamities, which are to visit the world before the establishment of our Lord's kingdom, are without any limitation, particularly as it respects the nations of the fourth monarchy. The whirlwind of the Lord is *every where* "to fall with pain on the head of the "wicked."*—"*Wheresoever*," says our Lord, "the "carcase is, *there* will the eagles be gathered to-"gether."† The righteous only, who are first typified by the 144,000 sealed ones, and are afterwards described as a great multitude whom no man could number,‡ are brought out of the great tribulation, as the Christian Jews were saved from the destruction

* Jer. xxx. 23. † Matt. xxiv. 28. ‡ Rev. vii. 9.

of Jerusalem. The great progress of real religion in this country affords indeed much cause for consolation and thankfulness; and without doubt it has been already instrumental in averting from us the cup of desolation, which has passed from nation to nation on the Continent; but unless it be followed by general repentance, it can afford no well founded expectation, that we shall ultimately escape the judgments, which are about to overwhelm an unbelieving and apostate world. I have observed in a former passage, that there are at present very far from being any indications of such national repentance; and that on the contrary there is melancholy and growing evidence of the rapid increase of wickedness and profligacy in this kingdom. Unless then we avert our eyes from the plainest declarations of Scripture, we cannot fail to perceive that our prospects are of a very alarming nature. These considerations ought surely to awaken the Christian to pray more earnestly for his country, and to quicken his own diligence, that he may individually be accounted worthy to escape the approaching wrath, and to stand before the Son of man.* These views will also lead us to look with some degree of suspicion upon those late interpretations of prophecy, so flattering to our national vanity, whereby we are taught to identify the British nation with the 144,000 sealed ones of the Apocalypse, that are to be preserved from the calamities of the third woe, and with the harpers standing on the sea of glass who sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.† To say the least of these interpretations, it is neither easy to

* Luke xxi. 36. † Rev. xv. 2, 3.

reconcile them with the present moral and religious state of this country, nor with the emphatical declaration of God to the children of Israel, contained in the prophecies of Jeremiah, "I am with thee, "saith the Lord, to save thee: *though I make a full "end of all the nations whither I have scattered "thee*, yet will I not make an end of thee: but "I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave "thee altogether unpunished."*

If indeed we saw any appearances of that deep humiliation and repentance which are the genuine and blessed fruits of national affliction when duly improved, we might gladly listen to the tale of peace, and even amidst the appalling prospects which surround us, we might take down our harps from the willows, and tune them to one of the songs of our Zion. But until such fruits are discernible, it is a rash and dangerous perversion of the Scriptures to take to ourselves promises, to which our national character does not correspond.

I would here call the attention of the reader, to the close analogy which is observable between the past dispensations of God to the church and the world, and the conclusions at which I have arrived, respecting the actual prospects of the nations of Christendom. In every new development of his plan of mercy and salvation to the human race, it has hitherto pleased God that mercy and judgment should as it were go hand in hand. The calling of Abraham and the birth of Isaac, were nearly coeval with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven. The exodus from Egypt was asso-

* Jer. xxx. 10, 11.

ciated with the desolation of that kingdom by the ten plagues, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. The establishment of Israel in the land of Canaan, was effected by the extirpation of a great part of the aboriginal inhabitants. The settlement of the crown of Israel in the person and family of David was accompanied with dreadful wars, whereby the remainder of the Canaanitish nations were brought into subjection or destroyed. The return of Judah from the Babylonish captivity, was preceded by the fall of the empire of Assyria. That dispensation whereby the Gentiles were received into the church in the room of the Jews, was followed by the destruction of Jerusalem with circumstances of so awful a nature as made it a fit type and emblem of the judgments of the last days. In concluding, therefore, that the glorious inauguration of our Lord in his millennial kingdom, which is to be ushered in by his second advent with the clouds of heaven, shall likewise be signalized by the most terrific displays of the Divine wrath against an unbelieving world, we not only are guided by the unerring testimony of prophecy, but we might even, *a priori*, without any express assurances to that effect, have been led to form similar expectations, from an attentive study of the dispensations of providence in past ages.

It remains for me to observe, that the second causes, by which the approaching desolations are probably in a great measure to be effected, have long been in active operation. They consist of those dreadful principles of political, moral, and religious insubordination and disorganization, which burst

forth at the French revolution, and have ever since been working, sometimes openly and at others more covertly, in the body politic. These principles are the natural and necessary fruit of the general diffusion of unsanctified knowledge among all classes of society. As the fall of our species in the persons of our first parents, proceeded from the desire of forbidden knowledge, so the last great crisis of the world will probably arise from the actual dissemination of carnal worldly knowledge, or that false science which will not submit itself to the revealed will of God, but rises in rebellion against all divine and human government and authority.* From this source proceed all those crude schemes of regeneration, whereby our modern political fanatics promise to correct the moral disorders of the world, and to bring in the millennium of philosophy, but which, if their execution be seriously attempted, as it possibly may be at the last great catastrophe, shall be found to have introduced the most awful disorder, and shall deluge the world with blood.

Bishop Horsley in his notes on Psalm xlvi. ob-

* Let no one here misrepresent my meaning, as if I were the enemy of the diffusion of true knowledge. False knowledge, or, as Mr. Southey well calls it, *half knowledge*, is a moral poison. True knowledge is wholesome food. If we warn a man against poison, does it follow that we mean to starve him? Half knowledge leads men away from God, and doubtless it will be one part of the awful punishment of the celebrated writers of the infidel school, who have perverted their faculties to the ruin of thousands, to be dragged forth before an assembled universe, and exposed to shame and confusion of face, as mere drivellers in all sound reasoning. True knowledge, on the other hand, is the inseparable associate of religion, it leads to God and to the cross of Christ, in which centre the full radiance of his moral perfections.

serves, that the restoration of the Jews will be one of the first things at the season of the second advent. He supposes that the river and its streams which make glad the city of God, may symbolize the regular government then established amongst the Jews,* and that the removing of the earth, and the casting the mountains into the sea, denotes the breaking in pieces civil government and the dissolution of monarchies in democracy, so that at the very same period when the Jews enjoy the blessings of a settled state, the rest of the world shall be plunged in frightful anarchy. The reader will see a striking analogy between these views of that eminently learned divine, and what I have advanced on the subject.

How near the last scene of desolation, and the great day of the Lord may be, it is impossible to say. Notwithstanding the present pause in the operation of some of the vials, there are many indications which to observing minds, unite in testifying that the last times are rapidly hastening on. "The "fourth kingdom is perishing as monarchy never "before perished. By disorganization, religious, "political, and social, that empire seems ready to "explode and vanish for ever."† And though I have endeavoured to show, that the restoration of the Jews must precede the great day of Armageddon, yet I may be entirely mistaken in my inferences about the order in which the different events shall

* I conceive that this river rather denotes the abundant influences of the Spirit which shall then be enjoyed by the church. But I completely agree with Bishop Horsley in applying the Psalm itself to the events of the last time.

† Butt on the Seventy Weeks, Appendix, p. 29.

happen. Our Lord himself has emphatically assured us, "Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that "watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk "naked and they see his shame;" and from these words we may certainly conclude, that he will come at a time, when few even of his own people expect it. In the mean while it becomes us to "gird up the loins "of our minds,"* and to prepare for that "*time of* "*trouble such as there never was since there was* "*a nation*,"† which shall usher in the redemption of the church, and be introductory to those scenes of peace, and glory, and righteousness, for which the servants of God have prayed, and laboured, and fainted in every age. No human power or wisdom can avert the terrific events which are approaching. But if, through faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we wash our robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, then we shall individually be numbered with that great multitude, who shall come out of *the great tribulation*, and with palms in their hands shall stand before the throne, crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God which sitteth "upon the throne, and to the Lamb.‡"

* 1 Peter i. 13. † Dan. xii. 1. ‡ Rev. vii. 9—17.

CHAPTER XIX.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE WORLD, IN CONNECTION WITH PROPHECY.

HAVING closed what I had to offer on the Apocalyptic prophecies, I shall add a few practical observations, to which I am led by the nature of the conclusions at which I have arrived in the preceding pages.

The extraordinary aspect of the present times cannot but arrest the attention and excite the awe of all thinking persons, whether they believe in the scriptures or not. But it is the Christian only that is enabled to see light in the midst of darkness, to behold undismayed the convulsions which agitate the nations of the earth; and, possessing his mind in perfect peace, to rejoice in the near prospect of a better and brighter day, when "the earth shall be "full of the knowledge of the Lord;"* and the Lord shall arise upon Sion, and his glory shall be seen upon her.

The events of the period in which we live, call upon us to sit loose to temporal things, and to remember that the fashion of this world passeth away. We have indeed no warrant in the scriptures to neglect the duties of our secular callings: on the contrary, we are commanded to be diligent in all lawful business, and God has in various instances marked with his peculiar approbation the industrious performance of worldly duties. When He first

* Isaiah xi. 2.

appeared to his servant Moses at Mount Horeb, Moses was occupied in tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro. When the nativity of Christ was announced by an angel from heaven, he was sent to shepherds who kept watch over their flocks by night in the plains of Bethlehem. The true secret of Christianity is to attend diligently to all the duties of life, yet to do it not in the spirit of the world, but with the temper and feelings of those who are habitually impressed with the great realities of eternity—to do all to God, and not to man. Possessed of such views, the true servant of Christ, amidst the whirlwinds of divine wrath, which go forth to destroy the wicked, shall be enabled to lift his head above the storm, and to stand unmoved. He must indeed expect to partake of suffering, in common with the world in which he lives: but "his "heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."* He rejoices that "there is a river, the streams whereof shall "make glad the city of God, the holy place of the "tabernacles of the Most High."†

We may infer from the present state and prospects of the world, connected with the declarations of prophecy, that there is no safety either for individuals or communities, but in repentance and faith in the Son of God. It is, however, in an especial manner to the great and the noble, the counsellors of princes, and princes themselves, that the calamities of the times, and the awful judgments of God, address themselves, as with a voice of thunder.‡

* Psalm cxii. 7. † Psalm xlvi. 4.

‡ The late discussions respecting the lottery, afford striking evidence how little our public measures are yet guided by a supreme

Nor does this voice sound with less loudness or importunity, in the ears of the bishops and ministers

regard to the revealed will of God. It was not denied that the principle of this measure was injurious to morality, and that it was far from being good even as a permanent financial measure; but it was said, that those who opposed it had not pointed out any thing to make up the deficiency, which was an evil in the present state of the country equal to any of the lottery itself. But will God admit the plea of state necessity for disobedience to his eternal laws? Or is any failure of revenue an evil to be compared with that of drawing down upon our country the divine displeasure? Or can we hope to prosper if God frown upon us? O when shall our senators and statesmen find out, that the favour of God is a surer defence than fleets and armies and an overflowing treasury! In these times the only safe motto, even for princes and their counsellors, is, *Fiat justitia ruat cœlum.*

It is well that our great men encourage Bible Societies by their presence, and support them by their eloquence. They thereby render that external homage to the majesty of Divine Truth, which it is their bounden duty to do. But if they would save themselves, or save their country, they must do far more than this. They must fearlessly bring the principles of the Bible into the senate, they must learn to glory in an entire and unreserved subjection to those principles, and make them the rule of their public conduct and the criterion of their measures. Then might we hope for the returning favour of the Almighty.

This is the reformation which is necessary to heal the wounds of the state; and not as the wicked and designing, or perhaps, in some cases deluded leaders of the populace would persuade them, a reform in the representation of the people in parliament: for with all its defects, the British House of Commons, is probably the purest representative assembly on earth. The plans of those who call themselves Reformers, mean every thing, or any thing, but personal reformation, and subjection to the revealed will of God. This indeed is the fatal disease of the age, that men, instead of turning to God who has smitten them, are occupied with the dangerous and desperate schemes of state-quackery, learned in the school of that revolution, which has already deluged Europe with blood. But in these awful times, the judgments of God are speaking not only to the great, but also to the lowest of the people, and calling upon them not to reform the state, but to repent of their sins and *reform themselves*; and if they obey not the warning voice of these judgments, they will be taught when too late, the deceitfulness and folly, as well as the guilt

of the protestant churches. No human establishments are now safe; we are surrounded with the ruins of thrones and kingdoms which have crumbled into dust. Where is the earthly throne under which we may now take shelter, and say, *Here are peace and safety?**

Let us however acknowledge, with the deepest humility and gratitude to God, that to us, of this highly favoured country, the voice of these judgments is still the voice of mercy calling to repentance. Hitherto we, and we alone of the nations of Europe, have been delivered from the devouring sword and the overwhelming tempest, and our God mercifully calls on us to take warning by the example of surrounding nations, and to turn to him with our whole hearts.†

The repentance which Christianity requires, is not merely an outward reformation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ calls upon us to feel and acknowledge that we are sinners. In this respect it tells us, that all men, from the prince upon the throne to the meanest of the people, are upon a level. None are exempt from the corruption of a fallen nature, or the

and wickedness of all those plans of state-reform, which are substituted for the reformation and repentance, required of every one of the children of men in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

* Much of this language may appear no longer applicable to the existing state of things. A few years will decide this point. If we be, as all later writers suppose, in the midst of the third woe, we shall before long be taught by experience, not to put our trust in present appearances. April, 1817.

† Since this was written we have been visited, not indeed with the sword or pestilence, but with national distress of a very complicated and alarming nature. Thus God is speaking to us. 2d Edit. April, 1817.

pollution of many actual transgressions. The prince, therefore, and the peasant, the noble and the plebeian, are equally called upon to acknowledge that corruption, and to confess these transgressions, to amend their ways, and to believe in the Son of God, who came down from heaven to save us from our sins by the sacrifice of himself upon the cross.

It seems evident that the dashing to pieces of the nations, like the vessels of a potter, which is mentioned in the second Psalm, has commenced. That Psalm, though it is quoted in the Acts of the Apostles, in the way of accommodation, as relating to the opposition made to the kingdom of Christ, in the days of our Lord's personal ministry,* does yet properly refer to the events of the last times, which immediately precede the establishment of the kingdom of Christ. The solemn and affectionate counsel which is addressed in the above Psalm, to the kings and rulers of nations, belongs therefore, in an especial manner, to the present period. "Be "wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed "ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear, "and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he "be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his "wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they "that put their trust in him."

* Acts iv. 25.

ERRATA.

Page 12, line 15, at the beginning, *for* This, *read* The. p. 109, l. 29. *f.* prophecy, *r.* prophesy. P. 203, note, l. 1. *f.* immitari, *r.* imitari. P. 247. note, l. 2. *f.* ths, *r.* the.

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